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On Your Palm (p.50)



NEW BLACKBERRY TREO & NOKIA MOBILE PHONES

Tech To Go (p.10)

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Demystified (p.46)



January 2007 Vol. 5 Iss. 01

CAN YOU DITCH Your Notebook

We Find Out
How Far
Smartphones
Will Get You



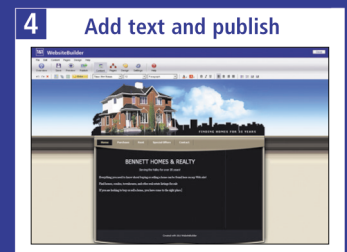
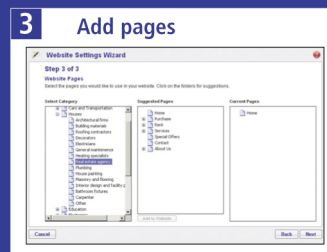
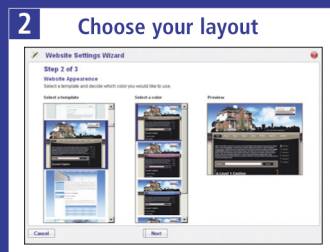
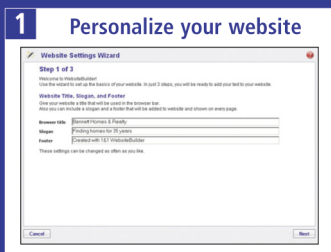
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Table Of Contents
Volume 5 • Issue 1
January 2007

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Featured Articles

Handheld devices have obviously come a long way since the early PalmPilot days. But when traveling for business can you really leave the notebook behind and rely solely on a smartphone to maintain your productivity? As we discovered in putting together this month's featured articles, the answer isn't cut-and-dried.

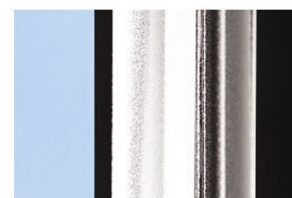
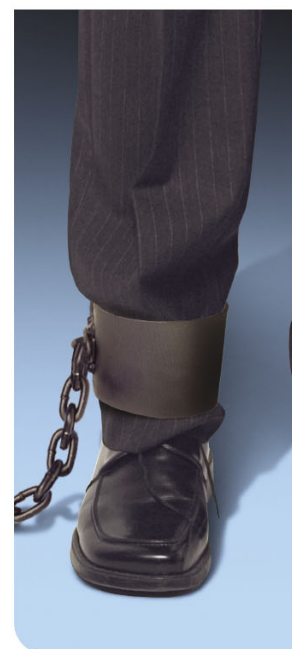
36 **Ditch Your Notebook For A Smartphone?** Yes! No! Maybe . . .

40 **Revenge Of The Notebook** Why You Can't Leave It Behind Just Yet



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1040-6484). *PC Today* USPS 022541 is published monthly for \$29 per year by Sandhills Publishing Company, 131 West Grand Drive, P.O. Box 85380, Lincoln, NE 68501-5380. Subscriber Services: (800) 733-3809. Periodicals postage paid at Lincoln, NE. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *PC Today*, P.O. Box 85380, Lincoln, NE 68501-5380.



34 WIRELESS EVERYWHERE



Logbook

We've Got Your Numbers.....	6
Noteworthy.....	8

Columnists

The Hot Spot.....	28
The Latest Wireless News	
Scot's Take.....	30
Vista Crossroads	
The Well-Tuned PC.....	32
Battery Tune-Ups	

Unwired

What Will They Think Of Next?.....	34
World Wide Wireless	

PC Today Online

Plan Your Next Trip Through PCToday.com.....	44
Check Out PCToday.com's Services	

Communications

3G, 4G & Beyond.....	46
Cellular Jargon Demystified	

Multitasking

Make Windows Mobile More Productive.....	48
Launchers, Web Browsers, Talk Applications & More	
Cut Some Corners.....	50
Use Palm Shortcuts To Save Time & Taps	

Mobile Software

New & Updated Mobile Software.....	52
Stay Ahead Of The Mobile Curve With Current Software	

Portable Gear

Serious Cases For Your Laptop.....	55
Just Bag It	

Travel

Stay Where You Land.....	58
Hotels Are Finding New Homes In Airports	

The Web

K.I.S.S.: Keep It Simple Syndication.....	61
The Best In RSS . . . & Dangers To Avoid	
Block The Bad Stuff.....	64
GreenBorder Pro Protects While You Surf	



46 **3G, 4G
& BEYOND**



58 STAY WHERE YOU LAND

Business Travel 911

Solve Wireless Internet Connection Problems.....	66
Can't Open That File.....	68
Fast Number-Crunching With Excel.....	70
Use Your Nokia Phone As A Modem.....	72

Departures

The Mobile Tech Answer Man.....	74
Our Guy Asks The Experts	
The Delayed Traveler.....	76
Admit It, This Is The First Page You Turned To	

Tech To Go..... Special Products Section

SPRINT PALM TREO 700WX	11
NOKIA E70	12
DOBSON CELLULAR SYSTEMS BLACKBERRY 7130G	13
RADIAN TECHNOLOGIES SKYTONE RST501	14
RISSLER RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT MOE BUSINESS	15
MVOX MV900 SPEAKER PHONE	16
BOXWAVE FLEXISKIN	17
LENOVO THINKPAD T60 WITH CINGULAR WIRELESS	18
SANDISK SANSa C240 & C250	19
RQK VIPER	20
KENSINGTON MICROSAVER DS NOTEBOOK LOCK	21
TRILOGY TOTAL TECHNOLOGY T3 SECURITY SUITE	22
SAGE TV PLACESHIFTER	23
VONAGE/D-LINK VWR WIRELESS-B/G BROADBAND ROUTER	24
OTTER PRODUCTS OTTERBOX FOR IPOD	25
SPRINT NOVATEL WIRELESS S720 SPRINT MOBILE BROADBAND CARD	26
ZAGAT SURVEY ZAGAT TO GO V5.0	27



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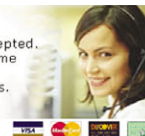
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We've Got Your Numbers

81



It's clear that the option for employees to **work from home or other locations** is becoming a standard procedure for many companies. A recent study indicates that 81% of companies already have **remote work policies** in place. Furthermore, IDC predicts that by 2009, mobile workers in the United States will account for more than 70% of the total workforce.

SOURCE: YOH

130

In the past six months, the number of **HSDPA** (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access) products entering the market has increased by 130%. A total of 58 HSDPA-enabled devices have been launched by 18 suppliers.

SOURCE: CELLULAR-NEWS

1,200

Thailand's new international airport has reportedly encountered **persistent problems** with its computerized luggage system since opening Sept. 28. A total of **1,200 pieces of luggage were lost** during the second weekend of operation, which affected more than 25 flights. The new airport, Suvarnabhumi, is located in Bangkok and is capable of handling 45 million passengers per year.

SOURCE: USA TODAY



The average airfare paid by business travelers in the United States jumped by 13% in Q2 2006.

AmEx's quarterly Business Travel Monitor reveals that the average one-way ticket increased to \$247 from \$218 in Q2 2005, meaning that business travelers paid more for airfare during this time than at any other time since 2001.

SOURCE: USA TODAY

50

Mobile TV is not just for teens anymore. A report from Telephia reveals that 50% of mobile TV users fall between the ages of **25 to 36**, and of those, 70% are male.

SOURCE: TELEPHIA



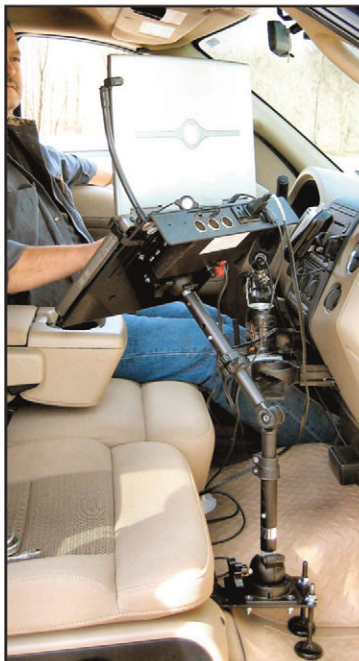
Among the Top 10 general news Web sites, a recent survey shows that **Yahoo! News** is No. 1. Following the popular Yahoo! News are MSNBC and AOL News as the No. 2 and No. 3 choices.

SOURCE: EMARKETER



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Noteworthy



Bye-Bye, Hotel Phone

Hotel phone service is singing its swan song, thanks in no small part to the proliferation of cell phones and other mobile devices. According to a recent *USA Today* study, most customers find that their handset provides a far cheaper alternative to the traditionally high charges incurred when using hotel phones. Similarly, most hotel customers turn to their Internet-capable mobile devices in the absence of free Internet service.

SOURCE: USA TODAY



The Future Of In-Flight Calling

Handset users who have eagerly anticipated cellular access on their next flight may have to wait a while longer. As always, it comes

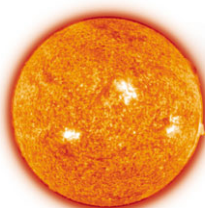
down to money. Recent TMF Associates research reveals that many airlines may not see a sufficient return on investment, should they choose to deploy in-flight cellular service. According to the study, such service could provide annual revenues of approximately \$600 million, but the high cost of equipment and the limited number of customers willing to pay for the premium-priced service could cut profits by over \$400 million.

SOURCE: TMF ASSOCIATES

Beware Solar Flares

We all know how inclement weather can turn an average flight into a precarious venture. But don't write off a bright, sunny day as cause for letting your guard down just yet. An accidental discovery in 2005 revealed that solar flare activity, tracked on two separate occasions, weakened GPS signals by as much as 50% throughout the duration of the flare. Obviously, such failure would not bode well for services that depend on GPS, such as aircraft navigation and search-and-rescue. To make matters worse, solar flare activity is expected to reach peak levels during 2011 and 2012.

SOURCE: CELLULAR-NEWS



West Coast Rules

When it comes to cellular etiquette, citizens from the West Coast edge out the other regions of the United States. A recent study shows that 65% of westerners agree that it's wrong to answer a call in a questionable setting, compared to 60% of southerners and 56% of folks from both the northeast and the Midwest. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the study also revealed that teens were the most likely to answer a call during a movie at the theater, with 9% replying that that was acceptable behavior.

SOURCE: SAMSUNG TELECOMMUNICATIONS



What's The Attraction?

Bangkok, Thailand's attractive new international airport, Suvarnabhumi, has received many welcome visitors, as well as more than a few unwelcome ones. The airport accommodates as many as 90,000 travelers per day. But on top of that, over 100,000 excited Thai tourists are dropping in to picnic and take pictures each day, despite the end of the visiting period Suvarnabhumi held prior to opening. As a result, the amount of litter has become unacceptable, and there aren't enough restrooms to accommodate the actual travelers. That's not the only problem airport officials have had to endure, though: Because of a computer glitch, over 1,200 pieces of luggage failed to reach their destinations during one weekend in early October.

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS & USA TODAY



JetBlue To Land In Chicago?

Frequent fliers out of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport searching for cheaper flights may have found a ray of hope. The discount-friendly JetBlue Airlines recently sought permission from the Federal Aviation Administration to begin limited service out of the notoriously congested airport. JetBlue faces an uphill battle, though, as competing airlines United and American dominate flights out of O'Hare.

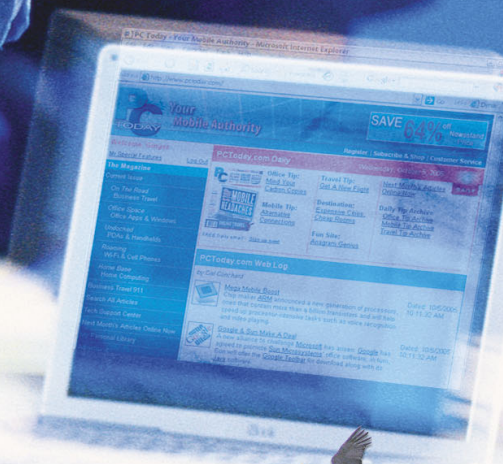
SOURCE: USA TODAY



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Tech To Go Special Products Section

This special products section is produced in partnership with leading manufacturers and software developers. It allows us to provide you with the most timely product information possible. Browse through these Tech To Go pages to learn more about the latest hot products.

SPRINT PALM TREO 700WX	11
NOKIA E70	12
DOBSON CELLULAR SYSTEMS BLACKBERRY 7130G	13
RADIAN TECHNOLOGIES SKYTONE RST501	14
RISSLER RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT MOE BUSINESS	15
MVOX MV900 SPEAKER PHONE	16
BOXWAVE FLEXISKIN	17
LENOVO THINKPAD T60 WITH CINGULAR WIRELESS	18
SANDISK SANSA C240 & C250	19
ROK VIPER	20
KENSINGTON MICROSAVER DS NOTEBOOK LOCK	21
TRILOGY TOTAL TECHNOLOGY T3 SECURITY SUITE	22
SAGE TV PLACESHIFTER	23
VONAGE/D-LINK VWR WIRELESS-B/G BROADBAND ROUTER	24
OTTER PRODUCTS OTTERBOX FOR IPOD	25
SPRINT NOVATEL WIRELESS S720 SPRINT MOBILE BROADBAND CARD	26
ZAGAT SURVEY ZAGAT TO GO V5.0	27



This Phone Means Business

Sprint's Palm® Treo™ 700wx is a Windows Mobile® 5.0 smartphone that features broadband-like speeds when paired with Sprint's Power Vision™ network. In addition, you can use the device as a wireless modem to connect a notebook to the network's EVDO data service. And when you use it with a Microsoft® Exchange Server, the Sprint Palm® Treo™ 700wx supports Windows Mobile® Direct Push Technology for automatic wireless email, calendar, and other updates. The phone is also compatible with Good Technology's mobile business services.

The Sprint Power Vision™ Network provides data speeds of 400 to 600Kbps. Where EVDO is not available, the device also supports 1xRTT (60 to 144Kbps) for data service. The all-digital, dual-band smartphone operates in the 800MHz and 1,900MHz frequencies.

The Treo™ 700wx features a QWERTY keyboard, 240 x 240 color display, speaker phone, voice recorder, hands-free headset jack, and Bluetooth®. It comes with 128MB of memory (of which 60MB is free for user applications) and a removable, rechargeable battery with five hours of talk time.

Key Features:

- Microsoft® Windows Mobile® 5.0 with Messaging and Security Feature Pack
- Windows Mobile® Direct Push Technology (when used with Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003)
- 1.3MP camera with video
- Built-in Bluetooth® wireless
- Slot for SD, SDIO, and MMC storage cards
- Dial-up network support for notebook computers
- Windows Mobile® applications, including Internet Explorer®, Word, Excel®, Outlook®, and PowerPoint®

Palm® Treo™ 700wx | \$399.99 After Discounts & Promotions
Sprint | www.sprint.com





A Messaging Master

With features that handle most types of messaging, the Nokia E70 is also a Symbian OS™ 9.1-powered, GSM tri-band phone. The phone supports SMS, IM, push-to-talk, and MMS with text, voice, video, and stills. In addition, the Nokia E70 works with a variety of email clients and attachments.

Supported email and PIM applications include BlackBerry Connect™, Seven Always-On Mail™, Microsoft® Outlook®, and Lotus® Notes. The Nokia E70 includes attachment editors for Microsoft Word, PowerPoint®, and Excel® documents.

If you're looking for a twist on keyboards, the number pad on the Nokia E70 phone folds over to reveal a split QWERTY board on either side of the display. The display changes orientation from portrait to landscape mode based on the keyboard position. Other features include a 2MP camera with video, Bluetooth® wireless technology, 802.11g Wi-Fi connectivity, 60MB of user-available memory, and a hot-swappable miniSD card slot.

The Nokia E70 requires an existing subscription to a GSM wireless network service with a SIM card from a carrier.

Nokia E70 Voice & Messaging Features Include:

- Voice dialing and commands for menu shortcuts and keyboard lock
- Internet calls over WLAN
- Ability to share WLAN connection with multiple applications simultaneously, such as email and Web browser
- Support for as many as six simultaneous Bluetooth® connections
- Caller ID with image
- Automatic volume control
- Nokia PC Suite lets you synchronize with Microsoft® Outlook® and Lotus® Notes

E70 | \$449.99 | Nokia | www.nokiausa.com

NOKIA



RIM Fidelity, Dobson Coverage

The new BlackBerry 7130g is now available through Dobson Cellular Systems, which provides service in 16 states. The 7130g is compatible with GSM/GPRS/EDGE networks, so domestic business travelers will appreciate the nationwide coverage, and international travelers will be able to take advantage of the 7130g's compatibility with GSM networks, which are available in about 170 countries worldwide.

As you're heading inside to attend a meeting or dashing back outside to catch a cab for the airport, the 7130g's LCD automatically adjusts to various indoor and

outdoor lighting conditions. Whether you're text messaging, reading email, catching up with the latest online news, or checking your caller ID, you won't have to miss important information as you wait for your eyes to adjust.

The MSRP for the 7130g is \$249.99, but when you sign a two-year agreement for service with Dobson Cellular Systems, you'll receive a \$50 rebate. Plan prices vary, of course, but in some of its 16 markets, Dobson features a price that bundles unlimited data service, 1,000 anytime nationwide minutes, and free nationwide long distance for \$75 per month.

The Dobson BlackBerry 7130g Incorporates The Fine Features RIM Is Known For:

- SureType keyboard functionality and QWERTY layout
- SEND, END, and MUTE keys for the phone
- Speaker phone & Bluetooth® support to accommodate wireless headsets and car kits
- Speed dial, conference calling, and call forwarding features
- BlackBerry Enterprise Server software
- Push-based wireless email access for as many as 10 email accounts

BlackBerry 7130g | Prices Vary | Dobson Cellular Systems
www.dobsoncellular.com

BlackBerry™



Lose The Headset

The inconvenience of being tethered to your computer to make or receive Skype™ phone calls has often overshadowed powerful Skype™ advantages, such as free SkypeIn calls, instant conference call setup, and text messaging. With Skype™'s IP phone features combined with the convenience of a standard cordless telephone, the SkyTone™ RST501 gives you tools to use Skype™ while you're away from your PC.

The SkyTone™ RST501 works intuitively with the accompanying Skype™ software to display your Skype™ contact list, caller ID,

and call history directly on the handset. If the handset detects line interference, the unit automatically selects a new channel. Echo cancellation and noise reduction features also optimize overall sound quality. A speakerphone activation button on the base unit lets you operate Skype™'s text messaging and voice features simultaneously.

The RST501's base and handset fit within the pockets of most laptop bags. The RST501's driver and sound card are integrated into the base unit, so you only need a USB port, high-speed Internet connection, and Skype™ software to get up and running.

SkyTone™ RST501 Specs & Features:

- Answer, hang up, and scroll contacts with the touch of a button
- 100 hours standby time, 10 hours talk time
- 2.4GHz frequency band
- Works with Windows 2000/XP
- Includes Skype™ setup software
- Full duplex communication
- Handset has radio range of 32 feet
- USB 1.1- and 2.0-compatible
- Conference call capabilities
- Compatible with Skype™, Google Talk, Vonage®, Xten, and Net2phone®

SkyTone™ RST501 | \$74.99 | Radian Technologies
www.eradian.com





Attention Road Warriors

The mobile office dream—being able to take your computing power on the road and work from just about anywhere—turns to frustration when you don't have an efficient way to transport, store, and use your mobile equipment. There are portable carts and desks for setting up shop in an office building, but road travel poses an entirely different set of challenges. Rissler Research & Development's MOE (Mobile Office Extension) Business answers the challenges. And it gives you full-screen access to your notebook's GPS software while you're driving.

The 6.5-pound MOE provides everything you need to create an ergonomic mobile workspace in a vehicle or anyplace you need to use your electronics. The MOE supports notebooks with screens ranging from 12 to 21 inches and other devices such as portable printers and DVD players. Unlike fixed in-car mounting systems, the MOE requires no permanent hardware installation, which makes it ideal for rental cars. The MOE is non-metallic, lightweight, and easily collapses for toting from one location to another or stowing it in an airplane's overhead bin.

MOE Business Features & Specs:

- Provides easy in-car and onsite access to notebook, portable printer, DVD player, and other devices
- Lets you use your notebook's GPS software while on the road
- Fits most vehicles
- Doesn't require installation hardware prohibited in rental vehicles
- Easy to collapse and relocate
- Converts into a laptop table
- Can be used on a vehicle's center console, arm-rest or bench seat.
- Measures 3 x 8 x 17 inches (HxWxD) without device attached

MOE Business | \$179.95
Rissler Research & Development | www.rissler-rd.com





Speak To Your Mobile Phone

The Mvox MV900 speaker phone gives Bluetooth®-enabled cell phones convenient, hands-free operation. As an alternative to a wired or wireless headset when you're driving, the device attaches to your car's visor and lets you control your phone via voice commands and voice keypad recognition—requiring only a single touch to initiate receiving, making, and ending calls.

For clear communications, the Mvox MV900 employs DSP-enabled echo cancellation and noise suppression. In addition to wireless Bluetooth® connectivity, the Mvox

MV900 comes with a USB cable to connect to a PC. Once connected, it provides speakerphone capability for conference calls and more to VoIP phones. The speakerphone also comes with an earpiece that plugs into a 2.5mm jack for private conversations.

The device is battery powered, with four hours of talk time and 200 hours of standby time. Connectors, controls, and indicators include a volume up/down dial, mute switch, on/off switch, mini USB-B jack, 4.0V DC power jack, charging indicator, talk button and indicator, mute button, and low battery indicator.

Key Components & Specifications:

- Full-duplex speakerphone with 120dB peak volume
- DSP echo canceller
- Voice command and voice keypad control
- 40mm, 4ohm mylar speaker, 500Hz to 5KHz
- Bluetooth® 1.1 and USB audio support
- Small size at 3.4 x 2.2 x 0.8 inches (HxWxD) and 2.5 ounces (with battery)
- Includes USB cable, AC adapter, earpiece, visor clip holster, neck strap, and documentation

MV900 Speaker Phone | Mvox | \$129.99 | www.mvox.com

mvox 
for true freedom of speech™



The Skin Case Perfected

Skin cases are slim-fit, shock-resistant cases made from a soft silicon base. Inexpensive and low-profile, they're making headway as a legitimate alternative to bulkier, more expensive leather cases. The best skin case examples, like BoxWave's® multi-award-winning FlexiSkin™, are custom made to every device—completely retaining a device's usability while providing a precision, no-gap fit.

And though BoxWave® made a name offering full-featured cases quickly after a device's debut, what they developed in the lab is the real reason BoxWave® is

taking an industry by storm. Most consumers are unaware skin cases are molded from a porous silicone material. The average case's surface has thousands of tiny holes for dust to settle in, and in as little as a day of use, a typical skin case is covered in dust.

To solve the problem, BoxWave® developed SmoothTexture™, a proprietary material which closes the thousands of holes on a skin case's surface—vastly reducing surface dust, increasing case smoothness, and dramatically bettering the user's practical and tactile experience.

BoxWave® FlexiSkin™ Features:

- Precise, ultra-low-profile fit for each device
- Protection from accidental bumps
- SmoothTexture™ for a smooth, anti-dust surface
- Available in a variety of colors
- Designed for the most popular Pocket PCs, Palm devices, cell phones, smartphones, digital cameras, and MP3 players, including all Apple iPod® models
- Also available for gaming devices and i-mate™, Mio™, MiTAC, and Pharos GPS devices

FlexiSkin™ | From \$12.95 | BoxWave® | www.boxwave.com





Even More Connectivity

Cingular® Wireless and Lenovo™ recently announced the Lenovo™ ThinkPad® T60 notebook bundled with Cingular® Wireless. With a Cingular® Wireless data plan, the notebook can connect to the high-speed BroadbandConnect data network. BroadbandConnect provides security features that protect business users, including encrypted data transmissions and compatibility with a number of VPN providers. The system verifies the SIM card in the notebook before connecting to the network and protects user identities and IP addresses.

The Lenovo™ ThinkPad® T60 is a thin and light notebook, starting at 4.6 pounds and 12.2 x 1 x 10 inches (HxWxD). The notebook features Windows® XP Professional, a 14.1- or 15-inch display, and a variety of configuration options such as Bluetooth® connectivity, a fingerprint reader, and optical drives. The ThinkVantage™ Active Protection System safeguards the shock-mounted hard drive. Other ThinkVantage™ technologies, such as Access Connections, which automatically adjusts the notebook's wired and wireless capabilities, make it easier to use the notebook in corporate environments.

Cingular® Wireless Data Plans For The Lenovo™ ThinkPad® T60:

- DataConnect: \$59.99 per month unlimited U.S. service
- DataConnect North America (United States, Canada, Mexico): \$109.99 per month
- DataConnect Global: \$139.99 per month
- Plans include access to Cingular® BroadbandConnect (average download speeds of 400 to 700Kbps) and EDGE wireless networks (average download speeds of 70 to 135Kbps)

ThinkPad® T60 With Cingular® Wireless | Starting at \$1,899
Lenovo™ | www.lenovo.com/cingular





Chips 'N' Sansa™

Expandable capacity. A replaceable battery. Dictation and FM radio recording. Who needs an iPod nano when you can have a Sansa™?

SanDisk®'s Sansa™ c200 series of MP3 players is composed of the 2GB c250 (\$99.99) and the 1GB c240 (\$79.99). You can add up to 2GB of extra storage with a microSD flash memory card, which means more room for your MP3s, WMAs, Audible, lossless WAVs, and photos. The PlaysForSure-compatible c200 family even plays DRM (digital rights management)-protected WMA files bought from online music stores such as Rhapsody

and Yahoo! Music. With a choice of subscription music services, you may be more likely to find the songs you want.

Speaking of photos, you can play slideshows of your pictures on a Sansa™'s 64,000-color screen as your music plays simultaneously. SanDisk® includes software that helps you convert your JPEG, TIFF, and other photo files to fit the Sansa™'s display. The c240 and c250 use USB 2.0 to download files from a Windows XP PC using Windows Media Player 10 or higher, or simple drags-and-drops. Both players have a one-year warranty.

The Sansa™ c200 Series Supports:

- MP3, WMA, Audible, and WAV files
- Photo slideshows on its 1.4-inch color display
- Up to 15 hours of battery life
- microSD cards for extra storage (as much as 2GB more capacity)
- Voice and FM radio recording; 20 FM presets
- PlaysForSure-compatible to play copy-protected and unprotected WMAs
- Easily replaceable battery

Sansa™ c240 & c250 | \$79.99 & \$99.99 | SanDisk®
www.sandisk.com

SanDisk 



Free Mobile-To-Mobile VoIP

For yet another way to use your mobile phone, ROK Mobile has developed ROK Viper—a free software application for mobile VoIP calls. The software, which you install on a desktop/notebook PC and your mobile phone, also lets you switch from its VoIP service to calling land lines and mobiles from your cellular service provider network.

For VoIP calls, the software connects a compatible Bluetooth® mobile phone to a Bluetooth®-enabled notebook or desktop PC. The computer and ROK Viper software can then harness an available

Internet connection to carry calls to other ROK Viper users at no charge.

You can use ROK Viper on the go in hotels, public hotspots, and airports with a Bluetooth®-enabled notebook and high-speed Internet connection. For businesses, all employees who install the software can use the service at no cost.

At press time, ROK Viper software was compatible with Nokia Bluetooth®-enabled phones, and ROK plans to add more than 100 mobiles and Windows devices to its list of compatible handsets during the next few months.

Requirements For Free VoIP Calling With ROK Viper:

- ROK Viper software (available for free at www.rokviper.com)
- A compatible mobile phone with built-in Bluetooth® technology
- A computer or notebook with built-in Bluetooth® or a Bluetooth® adapter
- Broadband connection through a cable modem, DSL, a local-area network, a Wi-Fi connection, or other high-speed technology
- A call recipient also using the ROK Viper software and service



ROK Viper | Free | ROK Mobile | www.rokviper.com



Theft-Proof Your Laptop

How much damage could a thief cause if he stole one of your company's notebooks? Most people agree that the majority of the value of a laptop is not the hardware and software, but the information the laptop contains. In fact, the cost of a stolen laptop could result in thousands of dollars in damage if the information on the stolen laptop was misused.

Instead of taking chances with top-secret company information, secure your notebook using Kensington's® new MicroSaver® DS Notebook Lock. This lock uses a nearly impenetrable multidisk locking mechanism. In

addition, the MicroSaver® DS Notebook Lock comes with two unique flat keys with millions of possible key combinations to help ensure your notebook's safety.

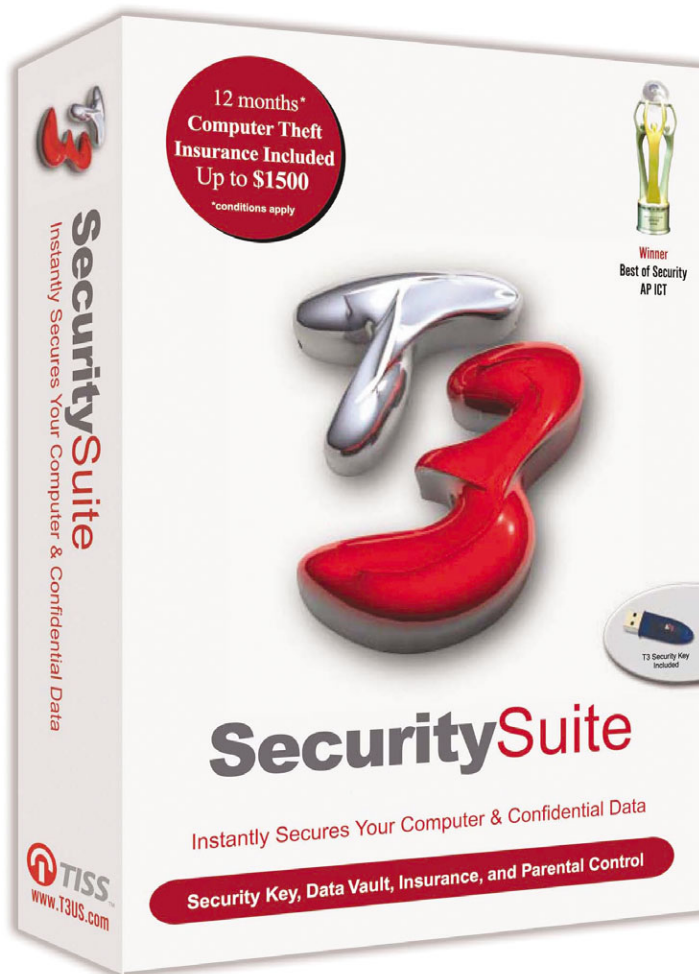
Attach the lock to your notebook using the standard Kensington® security slot found on most notebooks and other electronic devices. Then, before you leave your hotel room, attach the lock to a large piece of furniture or another immobile object using the six-foot cable. For maximum protection, this cable has three layers of cable strength: a carbon tempered steel core, aircraft-grade steel cable, and external steel braided sheath.

Kensington® MicroSaver® DS Notebook Lock Security Features:

- Nearly impenetrable disc-lock technology
- Patented T-bar locking mechanism
- 6-foot carbon tempered steel cable
- Attachment to the standard Kensington® security slot found in 99% of notebooks and other computer devices such as flat-panel monitors, projectors, printers, docking stations, and tablet PCs
- Backed by the Kensington® Limited Lifetime Warranty

MicroSaver® DS Notebook Lock | \$54.99 | Kensington®
us.kensington.com

 **Kensington®**
smart made simple



Threat Terminator

If you're like most people, you like to keep your computer as safe as possible. With the T3 Security Suite, you can do just that. After installation, the software will prevent any physical access (through the mouse or keyboard) to your computer unless the user possesses the USB key that plugs into your PC or notebook and contains your unique 64-bit serial number.

In addition to physically restricting access to unauthorized users, the software provides several electronic safety measures. It stores private files in a folder that is only visible to the T3 Security USB key holder

for sensitive documents and will keep a historical log of all usage to help administrators determine who accesses what on their machine. Parents can also prevent children from accessing undesirable Web content, define lists of "safe" Web sites and deny, limit, or grant URL access to different users.

Finally, when you purchase the T3 Security Suite, you also get insurance against theft or loss of your PC or laptop for 12 months. After you register for the coverage, it's good throughout the world and is renewable annually to help replace your hardware in the event of loss.

T3 Security Suite Hardware Requirements:

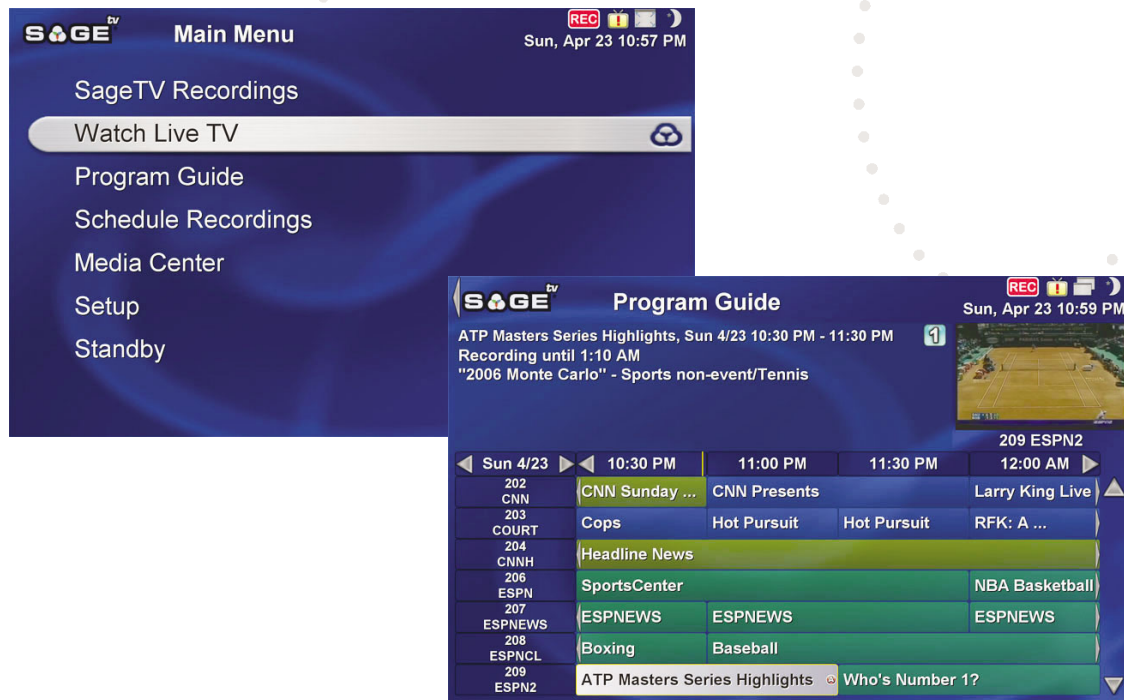
- Microsoft Windows® 2000/XP
- 128MB system memory
- At least 10MB hard disk space
- A free USB port (1.1 or later)

Internet Security Suite Features:

- Real-time virus scanning
- Pop-up filter
- Antispam filter
- Firewall
- Hourly updates



T3 Security Suite | \$99.95 | Trilogy Total Technology
www.t3us.com



TV To Go, Please

On the road again? At least you don't have to leave your favorite TV programs behind. If you're slated to spend the next several days at a Holiday Inn®, you might as well take "The Sopranos" along with you. Using the SageTV Placeshifter, you can watch live or recorded TV on your laptop while you're traveling and never miss your favorite TV series, sports, or local news again. In addition, access your videos, photos, and music from any PC while you're away from home.

The SageTV Placeshifter is an application that works in conjunction with the

SageTV PVR program to let users take their media with them anywhere they go. Use the Placeshifter to connect any laptop or PC to your remote SageTV Media Center through a high-speed Internet connection, whether you're at a hotel, airport, or Wi-Fi hotspot. The SageTV Placeshifter can also connect to SageTV from other PCs over a wired or wireless home network.

The SageTV Placeshifter is available as an add-on to Windows® and Linux OEM editions of SageTV Media Center Version 5.0. It is also available integrated with the core application.

SageTV Placeshifter Allows You To:

- Remotely connect to your SageTV Media Center using a high-speed Internet connection
- Enjoy live or recorded TV programs anytime, anywhere
- Access your video, music, and photos away from home
- Use the integrated program guide to search for and record your favorite TV shows
- Access SageTV from other PCs over wired or wireless home networks

Placeshifter | \$29.95 (as an add-on) | SageTV | www.sagetv.com

SAGE^{tv}
YOU'RE IN CONTROL



D-Link Meets Vonage

Four devices in one. That's how Vonage and D-Link describe their versatile, co-branded VWR Wireless-B/G Broadband Router for Vonage's phone service customers. The four devices of note include an 802.11b/g access point, integrated four-port switch, router, and two standard phone jacks. Vonage is bundling the VWR with its VoIP service; otherwise, the price is \$99.99.

After unpacking the VWR, you can use the integrated switch to plug in up to four Ethernet devices, such as PCs or notebooks. The built-in router lets you share a single

cable or DSL Internet connection across a network. The VWR's two phone jacks allow for such configurations as plugging in two different phone lines or plugging in a phone and a fax.

The VWR is designed for portability; setting it up in the office, home, or on the road is as easy as inserting it into a power outlet, plugging in a phone, and plugging in an available broadband Internet connection. Once you hear a dial tone, you should be ready to make calls. If you run into installation snags, Vonage has user's guides available at its Web site.

The Vonage/D-Link VWR Wireless-B/G Broadband Router Specs, Features & Facts:

- Hardware is bundled with Vonage's telephony service
- Uses Texas Instruments™ TNETV1060™ VoIP gateway chipset for voice processing and data routing tasks
- Wireless B access point provides 802.11b connectivity at 11Mbps
- Wireless G access point provides 802.11g connectivity at 54Mbps

D-Link®
Building Networks for People

Vonage

VWR Wireless-B/G Broadband Router | \$99.99
Vonage | www.vonage.com | D-Link | www.dlink.com



Dirt-Proof, Waterproof iPod

Are you the kind of iPod® lover who can't live without your beloved music player, even when you're in the water? If so, check out the latest additions to the OtterBox iPod® line of cases for video and nano models. New offerings include cases for 30GB, 60GB, and 80GB video models (\$49.95), as well as for the black or white first-generation 1GB, 2GB, and 4GB nanos (\$39.95). Cases for second-generation, color nanos are expected soon; you can sign up at Otter Products' Web site to be notified via email when they become available.

Building on an already impressive line of cases for mini, Shuffle™, 20GB, and photo iPods®, these latest models are waterproof to a depth of 3 feet, as well as dust-, dirt-, sand-, and drop-proof. A rubber interior lining holds the iPod® in place internally, while a clear, hard-plastic shell with a secure-close latch protects the iPod® from the outside.

Each case has a thin membrane that lets you control the iPod's® click wheel without having to open the case. OtterBox also includes a detachable belt clip, which also helps manage headphone wires. The nano cases also include a removable neck lanyard.

The OtterBox For iPod Specs, Features & Facts:

- Cases have a temperature range of 0 to 200 degrees Fahrenheit
- Otter Products suggests leak-testing your case before using it for swimming by submerging it in water for a minute and checking for interior seepage
- Cases are not suitable for scuba diving
- Optional armbands are \$14.95 each
- An optional \$87.85 package includes a case, armband, and waterproof H2O Audio Headphones
- Four optional mounts for video iPods® range from \$29.95 to \$49.95

Otterbox For iPod® | Prices vary by iPod model | Otter Products
www.otterbox.com





The Need For Speed

In our busy lives, crammed with meetings, projects, and personal commitments, we constantly look for ways to accomplish more in less time. Sometimes, this means multitasking; other times, we delegate tasks.

Another way to accomplish more in less time is to eliminate wait times. Using the new Novatel Wireless S720 Sprint Mobile Broadband Card, you can surf the Web at faster speeds than ever before. This card supports EVDO Revision A, the newest version of EVDO that is faster than previous mobile broadband connections.

Sprint recently announced plans to upgrade its current Power Vision Network to EVDO Revision A, with coverage expected to reach more than 40 million people by the end of the year. The S720 wireless card connected to the Power Vision Network gives you remote access to audio, video, and data applications at DSL-like speeds.

Service plans for the card currently range from \$39.99 per month for 40MB to \$79.99 per month for unlimited data usage. By signing a two-year subscriber agreement, you can receive unlimited data usage for \$59.99 per month.

Novatel Wireless S720 Features:

- Download speeds of 450 to 800Kbps and upload speeds of 300 to 400Kbps on EVDO Revision A networks
- Type II PC Card Slot
- Flip-up antenna
- Supports the upcoming Linksys® Wireless G-Router For Mobile Broadband
- Operating voltage of 3.3V to reduce battery drain
- Sprint Connection Manager
- CDMA wireless technology authentication and identification system
- MIN and ESN for security

Novatel Wireless S720 Sprint Mobile Broadband Card
\$249.99 | Sprint | www.sprint.com





Travel & Dine With Zagat

If a burgundy paperback book is one of your favorite travel companions, you already know how helpful Zagat Survey® guides are when trying to find a good place to eat or stay. With honest and accurate ratings and reviews comprising the popular vote, you're sure to get reliable information about restaurants, hotels, entertainment, and much more from Zagat Survey®.

ZAGAT TO GO takes all of the things you love about Zagat Survey® guides and puts them on your Palm®, Windows Mobile®, or BlackBerry® device or compatible mobile phone. ZAGAT TO GO includes Zagat

Survey® ratings for more than 24,000 restaurants and nightspots in over 70 cities. If that's not enough, you can store additional Zagat guides on external memory cards.

Browse ZAGAT TO GO listings by cuisine, category, neighborhood, feature, and Zagat's top lists. If you already know what you're looking for, the Advanced Search will help you locate the information quickly. With Palm®, Windows Mobile®, and BlackBerry PIM integration, you can easily add a reservation to your calendar. Version 5 also supports automatic updates for Palm® and Windows Mobile® handhelds.

New Features In ZAGAT TO GO v5.0:

- America's Top Golf Courses now included on BlackBerry and mobile phone versions
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ZAGATSURVEY®

The Hot Spot

The Latest Wireless News



Christian Perry is a long-time contributor to *Smart Computing* magazine, the *Smart Computing Reference Series*, and *PC Today*. Please send your feedback to christian@pctoday.com.

Nokia Unveils New WiMAX Wares

At the WiMAX World Conference and Expo in October, Nokia joined a host of other big-name companies entering the exploding WiMAX market. Nokia announced the Nokia Flexi WiMAX base station, which features a small, modular design that can help reduce both location space requirements and deployment costs.

The Flexi can use existing or new base station sites, can be used indoors or outdoors, and doesn't require air conditioning. According to the company, the device will be commercially available for the 2.5GHz band at the end of 2007 and for the 3.5GHz band in the first quarter of 2008. Nokia mobile devices that support WiMAX are also expected in 2008.

"Nokia is a strong believer in having a multiradio strategy that gives operators a future-proof solution and the flexibility to choose different technologies as they evolve," said Ari Lehtoranta, senior vice president, radio networks, Nokia, in a release.

The base station joins other new WiMAX offerings from Nokia, including end-to-end infrastructure technologies and services for planning, building, operating, and maintaining networks, as well as integrating end-user services into the networks.

Clearwire Claims 162,000 Pre-WiMAX Customers

Clearwire, which is currently conducting trials on mobile WiMAX technology, recently announced it has 162,000 customers using its pre-WiMAX service and expects to have up to 9 million customers by the end of the year.

The company has launched its services in Honolulu and has future plans to launch its services in Seattle, Raleigh, N.C., and Chico, Calif. Clearwire is currently conducting a mobile WiMAX trial in Grants Pass, Ore., using non-line-of-sight technology that sends a signal from a transmitter directly to a modem that plugs into customers' computers.

In that trial, anyone can purchase the service from certain local retailers. According to the company, it takes only minutes to configure the plug-and-play service, and after it's installed, customers can move the service to any location within Clearwire's coverage area.

"We've already heard so many great stories about how Clearwire is changing the way people live and work," said Michael Spence, Clearwire's general manager for Grants Pass, in a release. "We have real estate agents who access their email and listings while showing homes, and small business owners who cut

their Internet costs in half by taking their Clearwire modems with them to work in the morning and home with them at night. And of course, we have homeowners who enjoy moving their service from place to place inside their homes."

Research Before Unwiring, Says FTC

Cities and municipalities should carefully examine existing rules and regulations before jumping into municipal wireless, said a recent report from the Federal Trade Commission. The FTC's 61-page Municipal Provision of Wireless Internet is intended to serve as a guide for policymakers considering municipal Wi-Fi.

According to the report, wireless access can and will vary in different cities and municipalities, so it's crucial to follow a framework to determine all the potential benefits and drawbacks that such a service could provide. Also, there could very well be existing legislation in place, depending on the state.

"Municipalities' increasing interest and involvement in the development and management of wireless Internet networks appear to have spurred both state and federal legislators to introduce legislation that would define the extent to which municipalities may provide such services," read the report. "At

least 19 states have some kind of legislation that defines the extent to which municipalities may provide Internet service."

The report notes that at least eight of those 19 states passed such legislation between 2004 and 2006, while similar legislation was introduced in at least nine other states during that time. Not only do some of these bills propose to "define, restrict, or eliminate municipalities' ability to provide wireless Internet service," but they also require areas considering Wi-Fi to conduct feasibility studies, long-term cost-benefit analyses, public hearing, or referendums.

The study also notes that proponents of municipal Wi-Fi "suggest that municipalities are inherently risk-averse and would not consider providing wireless Internet service unless it were genuinely necessary. In addition, they argue that municipal involvement in other communications technologies such as cable television has been generally successful and demonstrates that municipalities can competently participate in a technologically sophisticated industry."

Opponents, on the other hand, say that the telecommunications markets differ widely from technologies with which municipalities have traditionally been involved, such as gas, water,



Clearwire is currently conducting mobile WiMAX trials and boasts 162,000 customers already using its pre-WiMAX service.

and electric. Further, because wireless technology is changing so quickly, municipalities must consider whether to install current technologies (such as Wi-Fi) or wait for future technologies (such as WiMAX) to mature. Municipalities installing current technologies run the risk of being stuck with an obsolete network, unless they're willing to upgrade.

T-Mobile Gives Mylo Users Free Wi-Fi

The mylo, Sony's clever new handheld Wi-Fi device,

could soon be the hit of hotspots around the nation, thanks to T-Mobile. The mobile carrier announced it will provide mylo users with up to 12 months of free access at all T-Mobile hotspot locations, which currently number 7,000, including locations at Starbucks, Borders Books and Music, FedEx Kinko's Office and Printer Centers, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, Red Roof Inns, airports, and other locations.

Unlike cellular phones that rely on cellular networks to communicate with other devices, the mylo uses Wi-Fi as its primary communication medium. The device revolves heavily around that communication aspect, featuring a QWERTY keyboard and software including Yahoo! Messenger, Skype, Google Talk, Yahoo! Mail, and more.

For each user, the promotion begins when the device first connects to a T-Mobile hotspot, but it ends on Dec. 31, 2007, for all users.



If you're a mylo owner, you'll enjoy free Wi-Fi access at T-Mobile hotspot locations for the next year, thanks to a new T-Mobile promotion.



Scot's Take

Vista Crossroads



Scot Finnie is Online Editorial Director at Computerworld and the author of Scot's Newsletter (www.scotsnewsletter.com). He's been a technology journalist for more than 20 years. Send him feedback at scot@pctoday.com.

Should I stay or should I go?" keeps echoing through my mind. The dilemma was immortalized in the song of the same name by The Clash on their 1982 album, "Combat Rock." I just can't figure out whether to move to Windows Vista right away, in a little while, or never. And the fact that I'm even debating with myself is a new experience. Since the release of Windows 95, I've more or less happily upgraded to every version of Windows but Windows Me, which I skipped entirely.

But Vista? The internal conflict stems from several aspects of the new Windows that I believe will severely diminish user experience. I'll get to those in a minute, but let's start with the high points. Under the hood, Vista is a very significant upgrade—a much bigger change from WinXP than WinXP was from Win2000. But very little of that architectural change results in advances in the user experience. That's why during the last couple of months, since the late prerelease builds of Vista trickled out, a barrage of complaints came from reviewers and bloggers about how little Vista wowed them. From a user perspective, Vista doesn't feel compelling as an upgrade.

On the other hand, Vista's two big benefits are a wide-ranging and profound security transplant and a video overhaul. If you want to rely on the operating system itself

to deliver your security, upgrading to Vista is a no-brainer. And while the video functionality may seem lightweight, it isn't. There are also some less attractive aspects of Microsoft's security improvements, and I'll come back to them.

Eye Of The User

The vast majority of underground pundits and even mainstream reviewers have summed up the new 3D Windows Vista Aero interface as being so much eye candy. Looking at any specific aspects of the new UI, I don't disagree. New capabilities, such as blurring, transparency, rapid rendering of vector-based graphics, instant scaling, detailed shadows, rotations and movements, and many others, don't mean a whole lot on their own.

But this new video functionality was part of a larger package of original Vista goals designed to underpin a whole new generation of Windows apps. Microsoft dropped most of Vista's other development-enabling features like so much wreckage along the wayside of the road to Vista. It's sad that what remains—Aero and a new set of Windows APIs—is all that's left of those intentions. But the user interface doesn't show off Vista's new video functionality all that well. It's third-party applications yet to come that might put Aero to work toward a more compelling advantage.

The other bigger improvements in Vista are pretty minor: reliability (yet to be proved), performance (yet to be proved), faster startup and shutdown times (this seems to be true, but again, it's yet to be proved in the final product), an improved Sleep mode, much better power-management features, integrated Desktop search, and a significantly improved suite of bundled apps and utilities. The suite includes several new applets that Windows has needed for years, such as a built-in calendar, parental controls, and a memory diagnostic utility.

A Less Attractive Side

Swirling around the release of Vista are three main acronyms: DRM (digital rights management), UAC (User Account Control), and SPP (Software Platform Protection). A big part of why I'm questioning whether to upgrade to Vista centers on the functionality behind these technologies, which limit the user experience for the sake of an arguably greater good.

DRM is a technology designed to block copying and unauthorized reuse or distribution of digital content, such as high-definition video or music. As someone who writes words for a living, who believes in copyrights, I am openly in favor of artists being able to make money on their work. But the technology and methods of blocking this content are, in my opinion,

foolish. And again, I don't think some sort of limitation on user PCs is the right approach. Not only won't it work, but it will create an unhealthy user backlash. I don't think that Microsoft, Hollywood, or the music recording industry have created a workable, realistic user experience in Vista. And I don't want to live with the limitations.

There's nothing about the Vista security feature called UAC that isn't in the best interest of the user. In fact, that's the point. UAC is designed to protect less-experienced and less-security-savvy users from making mistakes. Essentially, it adds a last chance to prevent something bad from happening on your PC by way of malware or hackers. Other operating systems, especially Unix, employ similar security strategies. While Microsoft has significantly improved the UAC experience, however, the bottom line is this: Microsoft chose to err on the side of frustrating the user with numerous pop-up boxes, which are especially frequent during the hours, days, weeks, or months after first running Vista. Instead of being creative, working through a user interface that cuts back on the interruptions (as Apple has done in Mac OS X), Microsoft chose the security-is-my-life approach. Nothing compares to the fanaticism of the converted, and Microsoft is converted on security.

In the end, though, I have to wonder whether Microsoft, in its determination to protect us from ourselves at all costs, might have actually defeated the absolute security it holds so dear. When you get an overabundance of pop-up boxes, you tend to stop reading them. You just click OK. And many people will probably just bypass UAC altogether. The technology comes with an Off button, after all; if it didn't, I can tell you for certain I'd be giving Vista a miss. Microsoft should have created something elegant. Instead, it built something that feels more like a Pavlovian experiment in responding to pop-up alerts.

I'm reserving my deepest scorn for SPP, Microsoft's up-graded antipiracy protection program, whose software is built into Vista with absolutely no option to turn it off. This software has only one use: to line Microsoft's corporate coffers. Think of it as DRM technology designed especially for Microsoft's own software. Again, I have no problem with Microsoft protecting itself from software piracy and counterfeiting, especially from the millions of copies of Windows sold illegally by large counterfeit rings. However, SPP's measures, when applied to individual users, are way out of control. Among other aspects, SPP includes an "enhanced reduced functionality mode" that disables several features

of the operating system after 30 days when Microsoft's software deems a copy of Vista to be invalid or pirated.

My biggest concern about SPP is that there will be false positives, where legitimate copies of Vista are incorrectly identified as illegitimate. These concerns are founded on wide-ranging reports of false positives with the previous generation of Microsoft's WGA (Windows Genuine Advantage) anti-piracy software. If someone has knowingly pirated software, they should pay for it. But what about the people who unknowingly buy pirated software? What about the people who buy brand new PCs from Dell, HP, Sony, etc., who are inexplicably confronted with an invalid judgment by WGA or SPP? It happens more often than you might think. Microsoft's willingness to care less about those users adversely affected by this—even if they make up a tiny percentage of the total user base—because Microsoft cares more about combating software piracy is disturbing.

Therein lies my dilemma. It's hard to warm up to software whose behind-the-scenes goals aren't very user-focused. What's more apparent is that revenue streams are baked in, something that's becoming more and more overt. At its core, Vista is certainly a better OS than XP. But do I really want it?



The Well-Tuned PC

Battery Tune-Ups



Dave Methvin is chief technology officer of PC Pitstop, a free site that automatically diagnoses and fixes common PC problems. Contact Dave at dave@pctoday.com

Utility Of The Month: Power Options

I went looking for a utility that could be used to tweak power consumption and get battery information, but didn't find anything as easy to use as the one already inside Windows Control Panel. Click the Power Meter tab and then click the battery icon. You'll see a dialog with information about the manufacturer of the battery pack, and it may contain useful information such as a model or serial number that you can use to look up recall information at the Web site. For the best power consumption (at the cost of performance) go to the Power Scheme tab and select Max Battery.

Computing on the go is absolutely dependent on batteries. Without a good battery, you'll either be jostling for position around precious AC power outlets or reading a magazine with the computer stashed in your briefcase. Last month I focused on maximizing speed, but this month I'll look at the other side of the coin: battery performance. There are things you can do to squeeze more run time out of any battery and steps you can take to make sure the battery lasts longer. The recent epidemic of notebook battery troubles shows that battery run time isn't the only thing you need to think about when choosing and using batteries to keep a PC well-tuned—safety is important, too.

Safety First

The first order of business is to check your notebook vendor's Web site to see if your battery has been recalled. Do this even if you have already checked these sites before. The battery recall story developed over the course of a month, starting with Dell and Apple but later affecting IBM/Lenovo, Sony, Toshiba, Hitachi, Sharp, and others. Dell expanded its list of recalled batteries at least twice after the initial recall announcement, so you may not have received accurate information if you checked the first week that Dell recalled

its batteries. The defective battery cells were made by a division of Sony Electronics, but the battery packs usually won't have the Sony name on the outside. Because of that, only the PC manufacturer knows for sure whether your battery pack is affected.

The huge Sony battery recall is expected to create a shortage of replacement batteries until mid-2007. Sony and other battery manufacturers do not have the capacity to make enough batteries for both new systems and recall replacements, and they are unlikely to build new plants to satisfy what will probably be a short-term jump in demand. Shortages mean increased prices, which is bad news because notebook battery prices are already ridiculously high.

Why are all these batteries failing, anyway? In the case of the Sony batteries that were recalled, manufacturing defects caused problems that could eventually lead to a short circuit. Reports said that metal particles were introduced into the battery and eventually caused a short circuit. When the battery shorts out, it heats up even more and can lead to melting the plastic casing, smoke, and in some cases, an actual fire. This is made worse by the fact that when this particular type of battery overheats, it can release oxygen during the reaction. All it takes is a spark—very

possible with a short circuit—and suddenly the battery is off to a dangerous and self-sustaining burn.

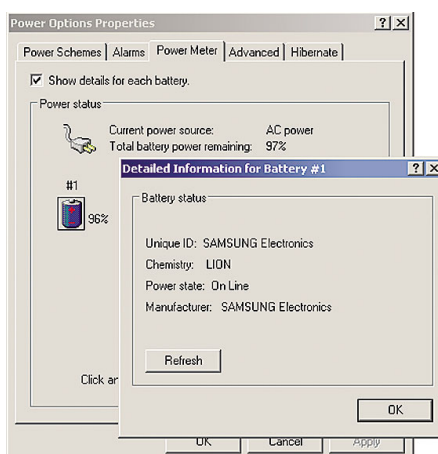
Don't fool yourself into thinking that this is just a Sony problem. Nearly all portable PCs built in the past five years use the same Li-Ion (lithium-ion) battery chemistry that Sony does. PC makers moved to Li-Ion because it has a higher energy density—you can get more power in less space than older technologies like nickel metal hydride or nickel cadmium. That allows the battery to take up less space in the notebook. Or, conversely, you can get a longer battery life for the same space. Yet there can be some significant risks to Li-Ion batteries. If you know how to care for the battery, you'll increase its useful life and reduce the chances of a meltdown.

Batteries, Not Bombs!

Besides batteries, there is another technical field where the term "energy density" is used by engineers: explosives. Batteries and bombs both store lots of energy. However, the battery engineer tries really hard to ensure that the power is released slowly as it runs your PC. For safety, all Li-Ion batteries have "smart battery" circuitry built in that turns off charging when the battery reaches a full charge or if the battery gets too hot. A battery is in its most dangerous

condition when it is close to its full charge, plugged into AC power, and very warm. Don't keep a battery in a hot place, such as a car in the blazing summer sun. Also keep a close eye on battery packs that have gotten banged around. If the battery pack shows cracks or other physical damage, don't use it. If you want some more tips on treating your battery right, I found quite a bit of good information at batteryuniversity.com.

If you're like a lot of portable PC users, most of your time is spent running on AC power. The battery doesn't even need to be plugged in for these cases. Depending on your situation, you may just want to run with the battery removed. That can be risky, though, because the battery does provide a buffer against power blackouts or accidental removal of the AC power cord. Without that backup power, your notebook will die almost immediately and you could lose work. You could, however, plug the notebook into a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) and use its battery instead. Most UPS units use sealed lead-acid batteries which, by the way, are heavy compared to the power they store but safer than Li-Ion.



The Power Options applet in Control Panel lets you set power management levels; you can also see the information reported by "smart battery" circuitry.

Notebook batteries are expensive. They also tend to be somewhat unique. As a result, it is difficult to find a good price from a third-party battery maker. Because smart batteries are more than just a collection of battery cells, it's not a potential home-brew project to build one, either. This recent episode of Sony battery failures has shown that a system meltdown from a bad battery is a possibility, so you're probably better off using the vendor's official equipment to avoid finger pointing in the event of a problem.

Typical disposable alkaline batteries have a long shelf life. You can buy them, leave them in a drawer for a year, and then pull them out and find that they still have nearly their full charge. Not so with Li-Ion notebook batteries. They start

to lose their capacity from the moment they are manufactured. Because of that, it's not a good idea to buy a second or third battery "just in case you need it sometime," because the battery is not likely to be in good shape a year or two later when your original battery starts to fade. Cooler (but not freezing) temperatures slow down the aging process, as does keeping the battery about half-charged in storage. Buy a new battery only when you really need it, and

see if there is a manufacturing date on the battery to ensure you're buying a fresh one.

In a nutshell, here is my advice on an optimal battery strategy. If you travel frequently and need every minute of battery life while unplugged, get a "travel battery" that you use only while on the road. When you arrive at the home or office, run your travel battery down (or charge it up) to about 50% charge, then put it in a zip-top bag and stash it in the refrigerator. While connected to AC power, use a UPS without a battery in the notebook, or use a second "junk" battery that will tide you over for power failures or short trips. If you work in an office with several identical notebooks, don't throw out any weak batteries; you can use them as junk batteries.





What Will They Think Of Next?

World Wide Wireless

In order for us to live our digital lives as we wish, today's technophile-on-the-go needs both cellular service and a Wi-Fi signal. As long as you're in a major metropolitan area (and increasingly more not-so-major ones) you have coverage to spare. But what happens if your travels take you outside these well-covered areas? That is the question facing wireless providers and ISPs. Not necessarily for just business travelers, but also for residents areas where coverage is not guaranteed. With major cities, airports, and well-traveled stretches of Interstate highways covered, the problem now lies in the outlying areas. Mountainous terrain and rural areas without access to technology provide quite a challenge for providers of both Wi-Fi and cellular phone service.

In hilly or mountainous terrain, a service provider would have to put up a tower on every mountaintop to ensure coverage in every valley—not a very cost-effective solution. Providing high-speed Internet service to everyone in the country is also an expensive proposition because all users have to be within 5.5 km (3.4 miles) of a substation in order to guarantee that speeds meet the DSL standard. If they're lucky, individual

rural customers who want high-speed Internet can purchase satellite coverage, but even that is not available in all areas and can cost upwards of \$800 per month. Also, what happens when the equipment breaks down? It could take weeks for a service provider to get a trained repair crew to a remote broadcast station. Below, we're going to cover a couple of the ways that service is being provided to these otherwise inaccessible areas while keeping costs down and efficiency up.

The Long Arm Of Broadband

Because a phone substation every 3 miles and the staff to maintain the equipment becomes cost ineffective when trying to get DSL service to remote areas, ISPs have had to think of new ways of providing service to these outlying areas that will not only be cheap but also easy to repair in case of failure. One such service is called WiMAX (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access). Very similar to Wi-Fi, WiMAX is a wireless high-speed Internet connection that will allow users remote access to broadband Internet. The only difference is that while Wi-Fi coverage is good within about 300 feet of a hotspot, WiMAX offers a 30-mile radius. It's not completely ready for large-scale use, but Intel plans to have WiMAX chips in most

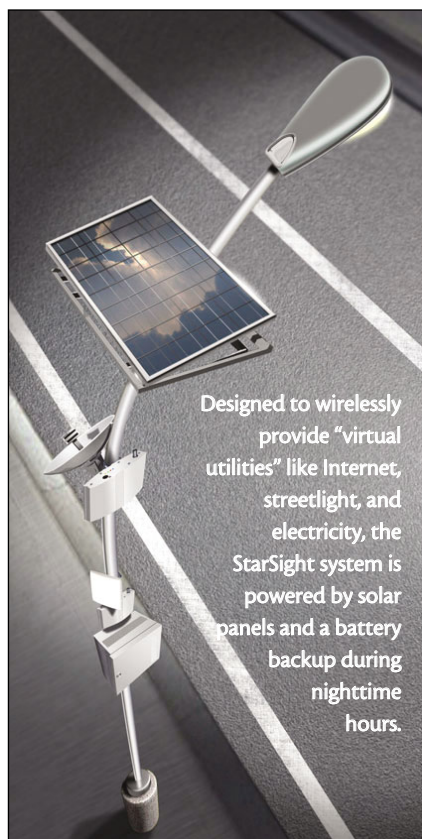
laptops within 3 years. This increase in range will mean good coverage for many rural areas but won't guarantee service to mountainous terrain.

Sunshine On Your Shoulders

One solution currently being investigated is to use solar power to keep small, relatively simple remote access points up and running. StarSight (www.starsightproject.com) and Green WiFi (www.green-wifi.org) are two organizations that are developing solar-powered Wi-Fi access points. The StarSight system is a so-called "virtual utility" that allows multiple services, such as Internet, streetlight, electricity, and several other services to be provided wirelessly by utilizing solar power. The StarSight Communications System is a device that runs on a 12-volt solar panel during the day and a 12-volt



The SoFi solar wireless Internet module (www.green-wifi.org) is designed to be deployed anywhere in the world, from rural areas to developing nations to disaster recovery zones.



Designed to wirelessly provide "virtual utilities" like Internet, streetlight, and electricity, the StarSight system is powered by solar panels and a battery backup during nighttime hours.

battery system during the dark hours and provides a Wi-Fi access point to subscribers.

Green WiFi is an organization whose primary focus is to provide high-speed Internet access to areas without reliable electricity. The founders noticed that, even though technology was being brought into developing countries, many of them wouldn't be able to use them to their full potential. So, Green WiFi began developing its SoFi modules. These modules are standalone Wi-Fi nodes that will work anywhere there is sunlight available. Though its main goal is to provide Internet access to developing countries, the company also recommends their product for rural areas within the United States—as well as in the disaster preparedness arena to assist rescue and relief workers in times of need.

It's A Bird! It's A Plane! It's Cellular Coverage!

Another solution that is far "outside the box" is to float the technology above our heads on blimps. Even though it

sounds far-fetched, the idea is under serious consideration by a company called Sanswire Networks (www.sanswire.com). The company is developing a fleet of balloons called Stratellites that will hover in the atmosphere at around 65,000 feet for a period of 18 months. These solar-powered, remote-controlled blimps will contain sophisticated radio and digital hardware that will be deployable almost anywhere (remote rural areas, disaster sites, or developing countries, for example). Because Stratellites carry a lower price tag than satellites and have no local footprint (unlike cell towers) these airships could someday provide the backbone for all of our communications needs.

... Where the Sun Doesn't Shine

One place many of us wouldn't think to include in a list of Internet or cellular "dead zones" is, quite literally, right under our noses... or at least underfoot. Tunnels, basements, and the central portions of large buildings are notorious for dropped calls and low Wi-Fi signal strength. While it is possible to cover many of these interior dead spaces with Wi-Fi or cellular signal repeaters, a simpler, more elegant solution would be simply to use a leaky coaxial cable. The term "leaky" means that there are holes cut into the outer conductive layer of traditional coaxial cable. These holes allow some of the signal to leave the cable and be used by people in proximity to the cable. These leaky cables can be set up into distributed antenna systems that offer transmission and receipt of radio signals. Additionally, leaky cables support many radio frequencies commonly used for cellular or data transmission and are adjustable to prevent interference with other radio signals in the area.

With more and more online users, the challenge now is to find a way to get a signal to them to allow everyone access to the amazing tool that is the Internet. Whether they are blimps, solar-powered service stations, or holey cables, the solutions are starting to emerge that could pave the way for a Web that is truly worldwide.

by David Miller

NEWSBRIEF

SideStep Acquires TravelPost

SideStep, the No. 10 most-visited travel Web site according to Hitwise, made its name as "the traveler's search engine," offering quick searches for bargain prices. The Santa Clara, Calif., company recently expanded its potential offerings by purchasing TravelPost.com, a Web site dedicated to collecting straightforward reviews and ratings from "real travelers." As of press time, you can still visit www.travelpost.com for the latest hotel and resort reviews.

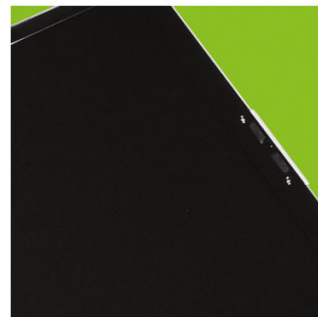
by Calvin Clinchard

NEWSBRIEF

Preview The View Before You Leave

If you're the kind of traveler who prefers to get a visual taste of a destination before taking to the air, check out the user-posted videos at the Travelistic Web site (www.travelistic.com). Billing itself as a "virtual voyager," Travelistic boasts more travel videos than any other travel site. "Travel is all about personal connections," says Travelistic founder and CEO Nicholas Butterworth, "and Travelistic connects people by providing them the opportunity to tell their life-changing travel stories through video." On the home page under Popular Tags, click the Business link for business travel-oriented destination previews.

by Calvin Clinchard



Ditch Your Notebook For A Smartphone?

Yes! No! Maybe . . .

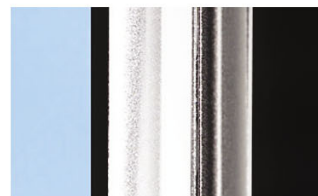
by Jennifer Farwell

Smartphones are now seeing the explosion in sales and features that many experts predicted a few years back. According to research firm IDC (International Data Corporation), worldwide smartphone shipments hit nearly 20 million in the second quarter of 2006. That's a 42.1% increase over the same quarter last year, and IDC expects shipments to reach 100 million units in 2007.

Leading the wave, says IDC research analyst Ryan Reith, is the growing availability of email solutions and the richer multimedia experiences these devices offer. In other words, the new generation of smartphones can stroke both your work side and your play side.

Smartphones are also becoming more compact and easier to use. Some models, such as the Motorola i930 (Windows Mobile OS) and the BlackBerry Pearl (Research In Motion BlackBerry OS), sport the size and form factor of a traditional cell phone. Others offer QWERTY (standard layout) keyboards, oversized screens, and other notebook-like features.

Is it time to close the lid on that notebook when you travel? The answer depends not only on your primary needs, but also on which phone and accompanying third-party programs you choose. For many users, the answer increasingly is, "Yes!"



Dial It Up

Smartphones were once the hands-down winners over notebooks for phone calls. However, with the release of PC-based VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) programs, road warriors can now make calls from their notebooks. (Cellular-enabled notebooks may also be on the horizon.) The fly in this ointment is that VoIP coverage isn't ubiquitous, and VoIP callers often lose 911 capabilities. (Depending on the provider, users may also give up the security of a proprietary network.) Assuming you must have a cell phone for consistent voice coverage, is a smartphone a better choice?

These devices' enhanced features make calling really easy. You can sync them with your desktop PC, saving you the hassle of manually moving (or text messaging) numbers and other contact info from your PC to your phone. Because of their expanded storage capacities, you can usually store all your PC's contact data on them. Most smartphones now support voice dialing, and a few (the T-Mobile MDA is one) support hands-free voice dialing over wireless (Bluetooth). Try that with your notebook.

Third-party call management utilities further expand your options. One example is Killer Mobile's AutoPilot (www.killermobile.com; currently Symbian S60 [Series 60] phones only, but coming soon to Windows Mobile and Series 80), which lets you record specialized greetings, reply with preset text messages, and create custom blacklists for any or every person who calls you.

Battery Life

As with so many portable devices, smartphone battery life varies greatly from one model to the next. In general, smartphones with good battery life offer at least five hours of talk time and over a week of standby time. However, browsing the Web, running applications, and keeping the Wi-Fi radio active (whether or not you are browsing) are all power-intensive operations that can cut battery life substantially.

Users report the Cingular 8125 and T-Mobile MDA (two different brands for essentially the same phone) offer exceptionally good battery life. In general, lower-megahertz processors offer the best battery life.

Going Wireless

Mobile phones of all types are the ultimate in portable convenience. However, if you are looking specifically for Wi-Fi, only a handful of smartphones include it. (T-Mobile's SDA and MDA both do, as does the Cingular 8125 and several recent Nokia models, including the N80 and E61/E62.)

With Wi-Fi on your smartphone, you'll enjoy better coverage than with most broadband cellular data plans, and you may also enjoy faster browsing. If you decide to bring your notebook along, you may be able to use your phone's Wi-Fi service to connect your notebook to the Internet, as well. However, Wi-Fi on a smartphone is not as fast as on most notebooks.

Printing & Faxing

An emerging requirement among smartphone users is the ability to print and fax. Unfortunately, both can be a bit of a crapshoot, depending on your device. Printing is easy using Bluetooth, but your smartphone won't detect the printer if it doesn't have the necessary profile. You may also be able to print via IR (infrared) or USB connection, depending on the capabilities of the phone's software and the local printer.

Windows Mobile 5.0 devices, which come with built-in support for printing, do

well. If you cannot print from your smartphone, numerous third-party developers offer software that can enable this function for you.

Faxing can similarly require some extra configuration. When a manufacturer says a smartphone supports sending and receiving of faxes, it may be referring to the ability to use the phone as a modem and fax from a PC (not much help when you leave your notebook at home). Many phones enable you to receive faxes as attachments to voicemails, but

you must then forward the attachment to a fax machine to view it.

To use your smartphone to send or receive viewable faxes requires software that converts documents into a faxable format and vice versa. Additionally, you must have a direct data connection for this to work.

Both the Palm Treo and Nokia 9000 series phones have built-in communication software that can create faxes and send them over the cellular data

connection. (You may need to contact your cellular provider to enable this feature.) Fortunately, if your smartphone cannot send or receive faxes, several companies make software or provide services that let you accomplish this function.



Smartphones such as the Motorola Q offer QWERTY keyboards and brightly lit, oversized screens for easy viewing.

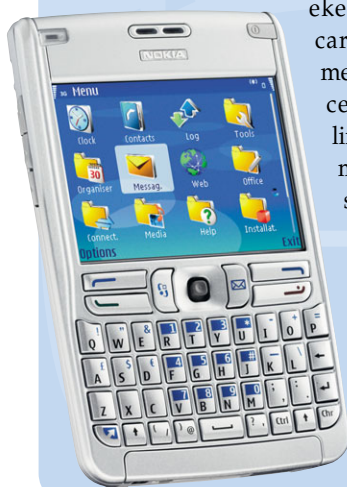
Store More?

For data and program storage, notebooks definitely have an edge. After all, you cannot store 60GB of data on a smartphone, right? However, if your storage needs are not significant, a smartphone may provide enough support for both data and programs.

Many smartphones offer at least 132MB of flash memory (reprogrammable storage space). The OS and manufacturer-installed programs consume some of this, leaving you half or less to use. Pay attention to the phone you purchase if storage is important; the Nokia E61/E62 and Palm Treo 700w (which runs Windows Mobile) both afford users 60MB or more.

Fortunately, most programs that come with mobile operating systems consume only a few hundred kilobytes of storage space, leaving plenty of room for programs. Additionally, most smartphones also accept flash memory cards with as much as 2GB capacity where you can store data such as photos, audio, and video.

Unless you plan to install dozens of programs, store large multimedia files, or want to eke by without add-on flash cards, a smartphone should meet most needs. In fact, processor and on-board ROM limitations are likely to cause more problems than storage space. Read on for details.



The Nokia E61 and E62 garner kudos from users for their performance and amount of user-available storage. (The E61 is available only as an unlocked phone, but T-Mobile and Cingular both support it.)

Multimedia

Many smartphones lack the oomph for top-quality video playback. That doesn't mean you cannot save videos in a compressed format suitable for playback (assuming you can deal with the small screen). Most smartphones now offer audio players, letting you enjoy your favorite tunes on the go.

For business use, many smartphones (especially Windows Mobile 5.0 units) make it possible to beam PowerPoint and multimedia presentations directly to external devices via Bluetooth or IR. This solution can be faster than setting up a notebook.

Information Management

All smartphones let you download third-party applications. Options range from sales-force automation software to games. (Palm users have an exceptionally wide selection.) Furthermore, smartphones also offer built-in productivity support—calendars, notepads, appointment reminders, and other desktop-style utilities—without requiring the user to purchase and install additional software.

Virtually all smartphones let you sync with your desktop PC, ensuring your contacts, calendar, and other business-agenda items stay up-to-date on both devices. (Leave your laptop behind, and you won't be spreading data over three devices.) In fact, a Frost & Sullivan survey found that smartphones (specifically Palm Treos in this survey) netted businesses an average productivity and efficiency benefit of \$11,125 per employee, per year.

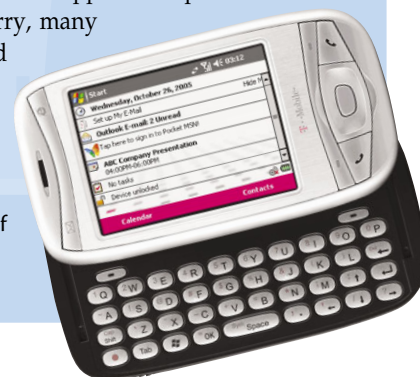
If you are hooked on Outlook, you may be happiest with a Windows Mobile device, although most smartphones can sync with Outlook even if they do not run the program's pocket variant.

Send Me A Message

Mobile phones are known for their SMS (short message service) text and MMS (multimedia messaging service) capabilities, and smartphones are no exception. Even those that don't sport cameras generally let you send and receive MMS messages, and virtually all support SMS messages. Most also support one or more instant messaging clients, so you won't lose a beat when you leave your notebook behind.

Until recently, email has been more of a challenge for all but BlackBerry users. However, most current-generation smartphones not only assign you an internal (provider-specific) email address but also support external email. Many support both Web email and standard corporate or personal email accounts; some also support BlackBerry accounts.

Furthermore, many smartphones now offer push email, meaning the phone will retrieve your messages automatically, whether you sign on or not. (You may be able to download push email software if your device does not already have this feature installed.) If full email support is important to you, the BlackBerry, many late-model Nokias, and Windows Mobile 5.0 devices (which offer Mobile Outlook) are good bets.



The T-Mobile MDA is one of a handful of phones that incorporates Wi-Fi support.

Web Browsing

In the early days of Internet-connected mobile phones, Web browsing was about as satisfying as day-old, dry toast. Now, smartphone browsers are more user-friendly, and useful mobile sites abound. Assuming you consider your Web browser's memory needs and can deal with the smaller screen, Web surfing can be quite satisfying on a smartphone. The trick is to obtain the best browser available.

Most smartphones come with a decent Web browser; Internet Explorer on Windows Mobile units offers a familiar experience, while Nokia's proprietary S60 3rd Edition browser draws raves for its ability to render full-sized Web pages in a way that makes the pages easy to view, navigate, and search. If you're not satisfied with the browser on your smartphone, install Opera Mobile (a free download at www.opera.com/products/mobile), a pint-sized version of the Opera Web browser. Opera Mobile uses technologies and connection management to optimize the display, page load time, and user experience.

Working With Documents

Can a smartphone replace your notebook for document creation and editing? The short answer is, "No way." There really is no replacement for a full-sized screen when you are creating a spreadsheet or a PowerPoint presentation. Nevertheless, if you rarely do more than viewing, playing, or making minor edits while on the road, a smartphone can easily replace your notebook. As with our earlier categories, the trick lies in having the right support.

Microsoft's Pocket and Mobile Office editions give you the capability to view, create, and edit Office documents. Not all Windows Mobile smartphones include a mobile version of Office. For example, the Cingular 8125 and T-Mobile MDA include it, while the Motorola Q does not. However, any Windows Mobile user can add Pocket Office.

Some, but not all, non-Windows smartphones include full support for documents. For those that lack support, third-party programs such as DataViz's Documents To Go enable non-Windows Mobile users to edit Office documents. Unlike many of its competitors, Documents To Go also supports WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, and Lotus 1-2-3 formats.

Performance Artist

Many of today's smartphones have processors in the 200 to 500MHz range and come equipped with 32 to 128MB worth of memory to run all the operating system's programs. Compared to a late-model notebook, that's nothing, but it should be enough to run your smartphone. The Palm Treo 700p, the BlackBerry 8700, and the Nokia S60 3rd Edition phones all fare well, speed-wise, in user reports.

Even more of a concern is memory capacity. In contrast to late-model Windows notebooks, many smartphones are slow (or require manual intervention) to release memory when you close a program. Additionally, closing programs can be a multistep process.

If you open more programs than your memory supports, you will see a low memory

message and your phone may crash. Most smartphones can run four to six programs (including installed utilities such as email clients and contact managers) with ease. However, Web browsers are memory hogs, consuming 2MB or more of RAM. High-tech games and high-resolution videos can suck up RAM like a Hoover.

If you are a hardcore gamer or watch videos in your off time, you might be happier with your notebook. Otherwise, if you purchase a smartphone with a reasonable post-startup RAM allowance (20MB or more) and close programs when you are finished with them, everything should run just fine.

The Cool Factor

In the 1980s, many sales managers recommended their salespeople call prospects from a cellular phone (announcing they were in their cars) because the targets were almost certain to pick up. The fascination with the new technology was so intense that otherwise hard-to-reach prospects were hooked. While we cannot guarantee your vendors and clients will treat you with more respect if you do everything on your smartphone, it does have a certain "cool factor." Plus, you'll relieve yourself of pounds of excess baggage.

In this article, we've mentioned some specific smartphones. Other models may also have these features; we picked those that were mentioned in user reports more than others. Additionally, new players arrive weekly. If you are in the market for a smartphone to replace your notebook, decide which features matter most, do your homework (online reviews abound), and then use your cellular provider's trial period to make sure you've made the right decision.

Opera Mobile is a free add-on that provides enhanced browsing features such as auto-complete, password storage, and keyboard shortcuts.



Revenge Of The Notebook

Why You Can't Leave It Behind Just Yet

by David Miller

Sure, the latest smartphones are smaller, more feature-packed, and more powerful than their predecessors, but that doesn't mean you can just abandon your notebook. Not just yet. While most smartphones allow you to access email, work on documents, send text messages, and make phone calls, there are some things you simply can't do with a handheld device.

The storage capacity of a top-end smartphone is only 128MB at best, with the option to expand that capacity using miniSD cards. While 1GB is enough space for quite a few presentations or documents, keeping track of multiple SD cards can be a pain and, for many business travelers, not worth the hassle. Also, if you're on the road a lot and might have to change travel plans mid-trip, what happens if you don't have the right memory card with you? You could have a colleague

email an important file to you, provided you have enough space. Is it really worth the worry? Maybe. But when you include all the other things your laptop can do for you (surf the Web on a full screen, for instance, or play DVDs, your whole library of MP3s, or the latest video game), many users just don't feel that they can comfortably eliminate their notebook from their carry-on luggage.

Don't misunderstand our point; smartphones are great and someday will *probably* completely replace your laptop for all your computing needs. But for many, that day won't be anytime soon. With increases in graphics power, processing speed, and hard drive space and decreases in size and weight, laptops aren't out of your future just yet. Hopefully, some of the features we talk about here will convince you to keep your notebook around for a while longer.



Reach Out & Touch

The biggest draw of a smartphone is that, in addition to sending and receiving emails, managing contacts, and editing documents, you can also place and receive phone calls. Well, you can do that with your laptop, as well. The recent upsurge in VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technology has prompted corresponding developments in service and technology. All you need is a notebook with a broadband Internet connection, wireless or

Using the Motorola VT2142 to access your Vonage account will allow you to make voice calls anywhere you have a broadband connection and a standard telephone.



wired. In some cases, as with the Motorola VT2142 (www.motorola.com) from Vonage (www.vonage.com), all you need is the converter and any landline telephone. Simply plug the adapter into your notebook, plug the phone into the adapter, and call away. Of course, you'll need a Vonage subscription, but that's not a big deal, either. For only \$24.99 a month, you can have unlimited local and long distance calls right from your notebook.

If you'd rather not carry around the adapter, Express Talk from NCS Swift Sound (www.nch.com.au/talk) is a software package that only requires a headset and microphone and you're ready to go. The basic package is free and allows you to call other VoIP users (also free) and any other phone number (if you sign up with a VoIP gateway service company; lists available at the NCS Web site). If you upgrade to the Express Talk Business Edition, you'll also get call conferencing, the ability to transfer and record calls, and other advanced options.

Many people will tell you that VoIP is not as convenient as a traditional cell phone service, and they might be right. You have to have your laptop and either an adapter and telephone or headset and mic. Also, due to the nature of the Internet, emergency 911 service was limited to nonexistent for VoIP users. That is one of the features that VoIP companies have been working on diligently, and they are coming up with solutions. For instance, Vonage customers who do not have access to basic 911 service (where emergency operators see only your phone number) or enhanced 911 services (where operators see your number and location) will be routed to a Vonage national emergency call center where a trained operator will collect information about the emergency and notify the appropriate response officials. If you're in a dire situation, these options might not suffice, which is why you shouldn't ditch your mobile phone just yet, either.

High Speed Wherever

Over the years, the Internet and the way we access it has changed drastically: first dial-up, then DSL and cable broadband, and then Wi-Fi at home and via hotspots. Now that you can connect to the Internet in almost any coffee shop with a Wi-Fi-enabled notebook, you almost never have to endure being disconnected. Almost. Smartphones offer the ability to connect to the Internet anywhere you can get a digital cellular signal.

Now, many national wireless providers are offering broadband coverage anywhere on their networks using a notebook computer with a PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) card slot. Verizon (www.verizon.com), Cingular (www.cingular.com), and Sprint (www.sprint.com), offer unlimited monthly broadband access for \$59.99 with qualifying voice calling plans. Other plans are available; check the respective companies' Web sites for details.

With these plans and the appropriate hardware you can use your notebook almost anywhere in the country, just as you can with many cell phones. Also, if you're looking to get rid of your smartphone you can use the cellular broadband-enabled notebook to make calls with your VoIP account. We don't recommend it, but it's technically possible, especially if you have a hands-free headset and microphone. Just don't try holding your notebook up to your ear—your arm will get tired pretty quickly. Once you're connected to the cellular broadband network, your notebook will have the same connectivity as your smartphone, but with so many additional features at your fingertips.

This trend is increasing so quickly that notebook computer manufacturers Dell (www.dell.com), HP (www.hp.com), and Lenovo (www.lenovo.com) have announced recently that they will be offering notebooks with onboard cellular broadband cards, eliminating the need for buying a third-party card.

A PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect) card like the Netgear RangeMax WN511T (www.netgear.com) can give a notebook user access to a cellular broadband network, making his "hotspot" almost anywhere in the United States—just as with a smartphone.

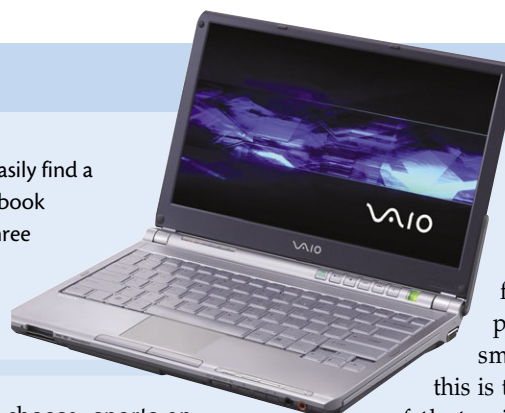


Smaller Isn't Always Better

One big argument for getting rid of your notebook in favor of a smartphone is size. With much functionality similar to a notebook, you can save the weight in your luggage or briefcase by leaving your notebook at home and using just your phone. If that's your only reason, you just might not have the right notebook. There are more and more notebooks that weigh less than five pounds and have all the functionality of the bigger units.

Sony's VAIO TX 750 weighs only 2.76 pounds and has a footprint of 10.7 x 7.7 inches. The Dell Latitude X1 weighs only 2.5 pounds and comes with as much as 1.28GB of RAM and 60GB of hard drive space. The 4.1-pound Toshiba Tecra M6 (www.toshibadirect.com) is 11.8 x 8.9 x 1.3 inches (HxWxD) and, depending on the

Nowadays you can easily find a small-footprint notebook weighing less than three pounds, such as the 2.76-pound Sony VAIO TX 750.



we just got through saying that a key benefit of smartphones is their small size, but this is the other side of that coin. A smart-

phone can be too small for efficient long-term use. Most of us don't have thumbs small enough to type with any kind of speed or accuracy on the tiny keyboards available on smartphones, and those tiny screens can be hard on the eyes. Much more than a few minor edits can be a real pain on such a small device. A larger keyboard and screen can make long work sessions easier to live through than if you were using a 3- x 3-inch LCD.

configuration you choose, sports an Intel Celeron Core Solo or Core Duo processor with speed ranging from 1.60 to 2.16GHz and enough memory slots for as much as 4GB of PC5300 DDR2 SDRAM. With notebooks this small, you might not even notice that you're carrying them, so the small size of your smartphone might not be enough reason to not bring a laptop with you.

Even the smallest of notebooks offer an advantage over a smartphone: They're bigger than a smartphone. Yes,

Get Your Game On

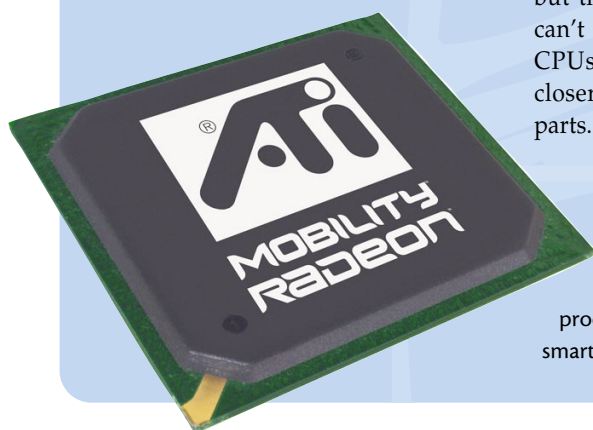
Like Solitaire? Minesweeper? Though they're fun, they can get a little old if they're all you've got to play, and you won't have many more options if all you have is a smartphone. The best you can currently hope for is basic 2D—retro, but not necessarily all you need to survive. Recently graphics cards have increased in speed and power to the point that mobile graphics cards are almost as powerful as desktop units. The Nvidia GeForce

FX Go 5200 and 5600 Mobile graphics processors (www.nvidia.com) have very similar performance to their desktop counterparts. Similarly, the new ATI Mobility Radeon graphics processors (www.ati.com) offer graphics quality so good that you might think you're sitting at home in front of your desktop.

All this graphics power can allow you to play your favorite PC game or watch a DVD and make it look good, but that doesn't mean a thing if you can't process the information. Mobile CPUs are also taking strides to get closer to their desktop CPU counterparts. Recently, Intel (www.intel.com)

released its Centrino Duo Mobile technology. The chipset requires 28% less power than the previous generation of Centrino chipsets. They also offer enhanced wireless technology with a more powerful transmitter and receiver that still require less power than previous Centrino Wi-Fi products. With clock speeds as fast as 2.33GHz, these notebook chipsets perform head-and-shoulders above the maximum 200 to 300MHz processors available in most smartphones.

Given the speed and graphics capabilities of notebooks (and the lack thereof in smartphones) there just is no way you'll be able to play anything more than the most basic games on a smartphone. Not to mention the DVD drive that's available standard on most laptops—try watching a rented movie on your phone. For sheer entertainment value, you just can't do without your notebook.



ATI Radeon Mobility graphics processors give you a much better picture than do the processors of even the highest-end smartphone models.

Room To Spare

We've already mentioned that most smartphones have 128MB of storage space onboard. Multiply that by about 100 and you're getting close to what notebooks offer. The Seagate Momentus 5400

(www.seagate.com) is a 5,400rpm 2.5-inch notebook hard drive that is available with up to 160GB capacity. Since the speed is so much slower than top-end desktop hard drives (top-end, full-size hard drive spins as fast as 10,000rpm), the power consumption is also much

lower, allowing you more time using your notebook for a sacrifice in system speed. All this extra space will come in handy when you're on the road.

If you don't want to sacrifice speed, you still have options. HP's dv9000z series notebooks come with optional SATA (Serial ATA) hard drives. With a dual drive, you can have up to 240GB space. They might use slightly more power (you can't get something for nothing), but SATA is fast, and you'll have quite a time trying to fill 240GB of disk space.

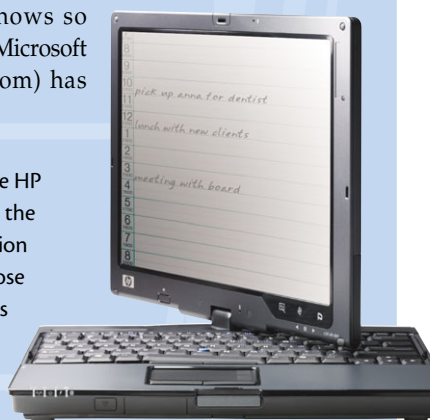


2.5-inch hard drives such as the Seagate Momentus 5400 spin slower than full-sized hard drives to conserve power, but offer up to 160GB of space. Would you really want to carry around a hundred 1GB SD cards?

Writing On The Wall

If you're someone who just needs to scribble to feel busy, you might think that a PDA or smartphone is the only way to go. You'd be wrong. Though some might mistake it for an oversized PDA, a tablet PC is actually a notebook computer on which you can write. The idea shows so much promise that Microsoft (www.microsoft.com) has

Tablet PCs such as the HP Compaq tc4200 offer the handwriting recognition features similar to those found in smartphones and PDAs.



even developed an operating system specifically for this new type of notebook aptly called Windows XP Tablet PC Edition. You can enter information using handwriting recognition, a virtual on-screen keyboard, your standard keyboard, or a mouse. All these features are an attempt to make data entry a more natural process.

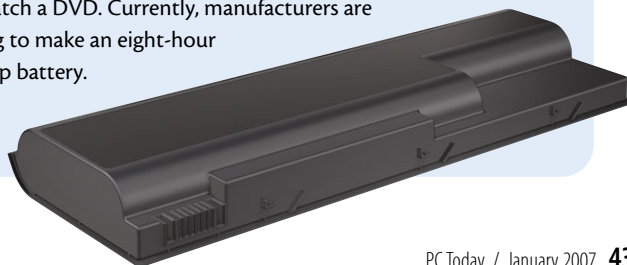
Being able to "write" text on your screen might be enough reason to keep a tablet PC notebook around, but you'll also get the features we've already discussed: more RAM, more storage, faster processor speeds, and so on. When you consider all of these features, you can get the handwritten text input functionality you love about your smartphone or PDA and combine it with the storage space and speed of your notebook.

It Goes On & On

While many of the newer smartphones have batteries that can last a week or more on standby, you'd be lucky to get three hours of actual working time, depending on what features you're using. This might be enough if you just want to touch up your presentation while you're on the road, and, to be honest, it's about what you can realistically expect from most notebooks. The benefit of a notebook is that for their size, there is still much more room for expansion in a notebook than there is in a smartphone. Battery life in a notebook will be more likely to increase significantly in the coming years than in smartphones. Intel is aiming to have an eight-hour notebook battery by 2008. That's a whole workday on one battery charge without having to worry about carrying an additional battery or charger. The chances of getting that kind of performance from a smartphone aren't likely anytime in the near future.

Smartphones are probably the wave of the future and will likely replace notebooks at some point. But that future is still a long time away. Between better graphics processing, more memory and disc space, advances in communication options, and higher battery life, there are many reasons to keep your notebook around for the time being. Of course, that's not to say that you shouldn't use a smartphone. They're small, stylish, have a long list of benefits, and are just plain cool. We're all technophiles here. Why not use both?

The HP dv8000 battery can give you up to two hours, 39 minutes to watch a DVD. Currently, manufacturers are trying to make an eight-hour laptop battery.



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The image displays three screenshots of the PCToday.com website. The top screenshot shows the homepage with a navigation menu on the left where 'Services' is highlighted with a red circle. The middle screenshot shows the 'Currency Converter' tool with input fields for 'Convert: 1' and 'U.S. Dollar (USD)', and a dropdown for 'Into: Euro (EUR)'. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Destination Guides' section, which lists '10Best Travel Guides' and 'AAA' as resources for travel planning.

Sneak Peek!

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3G, 4G & Beyond

Cellular Jargon Demystified

Combine ever-changing technology with a bunch of acronyms, and you're sure to confuse just about anyone. Given the number of acronyms present in today's cellular technology, it's no wonder cell phone shopping has become a source of frustration for many. To help ease the frustration, we've created a guide to help you sort out the letter jumble.

Technology Types

Before we begin to decode various cellular acronyms, it's important to understand the two types of cellular transmission technology in use in the United States: CDMA and GSM. CDMA technology evolved from the first cellular service offered; GSM was the first digital service. With a few exceptions, GSM is the standard used in most countries around the world.

CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access). Initially, CDMA was developed for military use in the late 1960s. CDMA transmits calls in a manner similar to the way in which data travels over the Internet by dispersing conversations over the available bandwidth during transmission. Multiple calls are then overlaid on each other using the same channel, with each call having a unique sequence code that is used to reassemble the voice transmission upon arrival.

One of the strengths behind CDMA technology is that it does not have a built-in limit to the number of concurrent users. In addition, CDMA uses **soft handoff** technology, which reduces the likelihood of dropped calls. Soft handoff technology detects multiple signals from nearby cell towers and reports each signal back to the mobile phone. If a signal is strong enough, the phone starts transmitting and receiving data using the new signal in addition to the old signal. As a signal weakens, the mobile phone

drops the weak signal and continues to transmit over the stronger signal(s).

GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication). Commercial cell phone service based on the GSM standard first became available in 1991. GSM encodes a user's speech and transmits it as a digital stream through the network. GSM devices share channels with other devices, and each device has its own time slot. GSM technology typically operates on the 900MHz or 1,800MHz frequencies.

GSM phones use a SIM (Subscriber Identity Module, aka SIM card) to link a phone to a subscriber's information and access the GSM network. A SIM contains the telephone number of the subscriber, network identification details, and other data, including a user's phone book.

Generations

Beyond the two primary types of cellular transmission technology, there are different generations of technology. First- and second-generation devices, typically noted **1G** and **2G**, respectively, are older technologies. 1G technologies are no longer in use, and 2G technologies are quickly fading out. Upcoming generations will offer higher transfer speeds that enable applications such as high-speed Internet browsing and the ability to watch full-length movies on your cell phone.

3G (Third-Generation mobile telephone technology). 3G technology supports higher data rates than previous generations and makes it possible for your cell phone to support video, video conferencing, and high-speed Internet access. In order to be considered 3G, a network must be able to transmit 144Kbps (kilobits per second) to users traveling in a car, 384Kbps to users traveling by foot, and 2Mbps (megabits per second) to users in fixed locations.

4G (Fourth-Generation). 4G technology is the generation of mobile



communication telephone technology beyond 3G. The IEEE's (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) official name for 4G is "3G and beyond." In order to fit the 4G category, a network must be able to transmit 100Mbps when mobile and 1Gbps (gigabits per second) when devices are still. There is a discrepancy in speed qualifications and terms, as Sprint has called their upcoming 802.16e mobile WiMAX network a 4G network. However, it will only support average download speeds between 2Mbps and 4Mbps.

The greater bandwidth available with 4G makes videophone transmissions, full-length video and audio downloads, and interactive games a greater possibility. Some people have also suggested that 4G could facilitate communication between technologies so that your handset could, for instance, pay for goods in a linked payment kiosk or tell your car to warm up in the morning. We

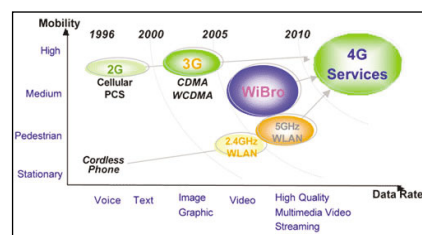


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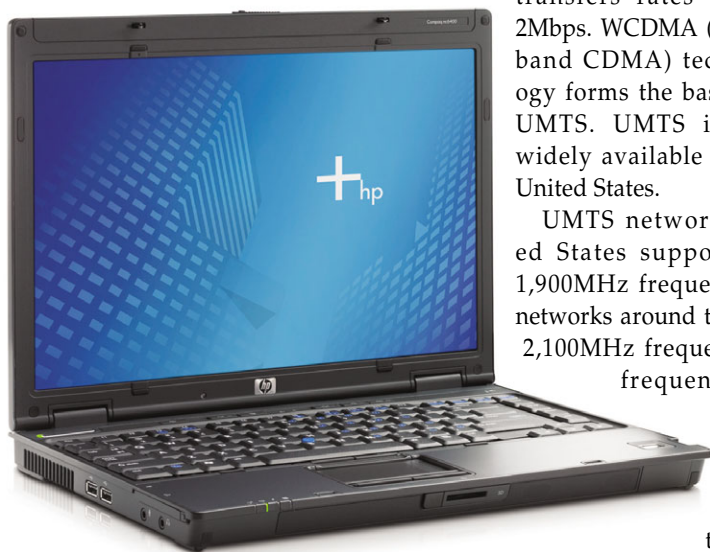
Wireless services will continue to progress towards 4G services with greater data rates and increased mobility.

will not know the true capabilities and uses for 4G technology until it is fully developed, and consumers demand or reject individual features.

3G & 4G Versions

Each generation has its own version of technology for CDMA and GSM networks. Because you'll see and hear more about 3G and 4G technologies in the upcoming months and years, it's important to have a general feel for the terms and features associated with these generational technologies.

EVDO (Evolution Data Optimized). EVDO is a CDMA 3G wireless broadband networking standard that comes in two variations: EVDO Release 0 and



Some laptops, such as this HP Compaq nc6400 (RA261AT) (\$1,449, data plan sold separately; www.hp.com), have built-in EVDO (Evolution Data Optimized) connectivity.

EVDO Revision A. EVDO Release 0 supports forward data link speeds up to 2.4Mbps and reverse link data rates up to 153Kbps. The newest variation, EVDO Rev. A, is faster than EVDO Release 0, with maximum speeds of 3.1Mbps on the forward link and 1.8Mbps on the reverse link. EVDO Rev. A also adds the ability to transmit VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and video telephone conversations on the same carrier with simultaneous delivery of voice and data. Revision A is backward compatible with Release 0 networks.

EVDO supports streaming video and music, gaming, video conferencing, and other high-demand applications. In order to use EVDO, you must have a compatible cell phone or PC Card and an EVDO data plan. Some of the newer laptops come with built-in EVDO connectivity, but a data plan is still required. Verizon Wireless, Sprint, and Alltel offer EVDO in the United States.

UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunications System). UMTS is a GSM 3G standard that supports data transfers rates up to 2Mbps. WCDMA (Wideband CDMA) technology forms the basis for UMTS. UMTS is not widely available in the United States.

UMTS networks in the United States support only on the 1,900MHz frequency; most other networks around the world use the 2,100MHz frequency. Because of frequency differences, UMTS phones designed for U.S. markets are not likely to operate overseas and vice versa.

HSDPA (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access). HSDPA is a GSM mobile telephone protocol that's faster than UMTS. HSDPA is sometimes



Sprint's new Sprint Movies service uses the EVDO network to stream full-length pay-per-view movies to your cell phone.

classified as a 3G technology; other times, people describe HSDPA as a 3.5G or 4G technology. HSDPA provides an upgrade path for UMTS networks. HSDPA supports up to 14.4Mbps in the downlink and 2Mbps in the uplink. HSDPA is backward compatible with WCDMA.

In the United States, Cingular offers HSDPA through their BroadbandConnect service. At press time, BroadbandConnect was available in 63 metropolitan markets with continued expansion occurring monthly. Cingular's Broadband Connect averages download speeds of 400 to 700Kbps. T-Mobile will soon launch a 3G network in the United States. According to a T-Mobile spokesperson, "While T-Mobile doesn't currently offer HSDPA, T-Mobile expects to bring 3G services, specifically HSDPA, to market in 2007."

Sort It All Out

As cellular technologies continue to evolve, you're sure to see more acronyms emerge. Only time will tell which technologies will become most popular and which acronyms will leave the radar screen. *by Jennifer Johnson*

Cellular Technology Evolution

	CDMA	GSM
Main Carriers	Sprint, Verizon Wireless	Cingular, T-Mobile
1G	Analog, 19.2Kbps	None
2G	1xRTT (Single Carrier Radio Transmission Technology), 128Kbps	GPRS (General Packet Radio Service), 40Kbps; EDGE (Enhanced Data Rates for Global Evolution), 160Kbps
3G	EVDO, 500-700Kbps	UMTS (or WCDMA), 2Mbps; HSDPA, 14.4Mbps

Make Windows Mobile More Productive

Launchers, Web Browsers, Task Applications & More

Your handheld device is a proven commodity, enabling you to not only make calls but also keep track of meetings, appointments, and notes. Check out the following applications to take your mobile productivity to the next level. *by Meryl K. Evans*



Web Browsing

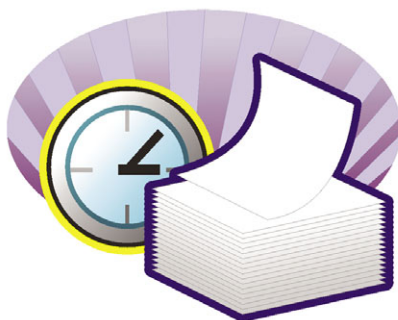
Windows Mobile devices come with Internet Explorer, but users have many other options available, including Webby Mobile (users.tpg.com.au/lordf/anoriginalidea/webby.htm), which comes with tabs for loading multiple pages and easy switching between pages. It also has an ad blocker and RSS reader for reading the latest news. Webby Mobile supports full-screen browsing and multiple resolutions.

The goal of Minimo's (www.mozilla.org/projects/minimo) developers was to create a browser that takes up little space and uses few resources on small devices. And in that, they have succeeded. Mozilla calls the free browser a "small version of Firefox" with many similar features, including tabs and the ability to change the look and feel of Web sites.

Manage Money

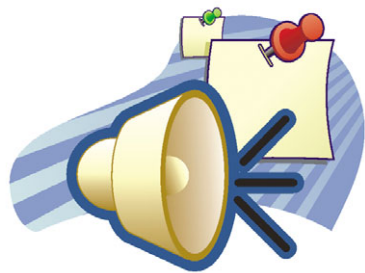
Carry your passwords, credit card numbers, health information, and other important records in eWallet (\$29.95; www.iliunsoft.com). Stop thinking of passwords and rely on its password generator—the application relies on 256-bit encryption to ensure the data stays secure.

Enter and track transactions, assets, and balances with PocketMoney For Axim 51 (\$29.99; www.handmark.com). Having a financial management application with you ensures you don't forget to add any withdrawals or charges. Quicken and Microsoft Money users can import and export the data into PocketMoney, but those who have neither can use it as a standalone application. A list of supported devices is available at the Handmark Software Web site.



Time & Project Tracking

Tracking time on a project is a challenge, especially since a person can switch projects or clients multiple times in a single day. Project Clock (\$35; www.cybermatrix.com) tracks tasks by project and client. The program creates reports that you can filter by client, project, date, and task. Project Clock has a separate desktop edition that can sync with the Pocket PC edition.



Tricked Out Notebooks & Alarms

BugMe! has been around for a long time for Palm OS devices and has recently become available for Windows Mobile devices. Write quick notes and set an alarm to remind yourself to act on the note with BugMe! Mobile (\$19.95; www.electricpocket.com). The app also lets you take screenshots, make notes, and send email and text messages. The program can also take voice notes,

display thumbnail views, lock notes, and accept repeating alarms.

For those needing more alarm power, alarmToday (www.pocketmax.net) displays all alarms and includes handwritten and voice-recorded alarm notes, macros, and alarms that can take action such as opening applications or playing music. alarmToday is available for about \$10.

Cleaning & Tweaking

Clean your Windows Mobile device's Registry, history, and files to get more RAM with SKTools v.3.0.60 (\$12.99; www.s-k-tools.com). The application comes with an uninstaller and over 70 system tweaks. Current users upgrade for free. SKTools Lite for Windows Mobile 5.0 smartphones is a free application with fewer features.

Get your device performing at peak levels by dumping junk files, running the defragmenter, and cleaning up Registry and duplicate files with Pocket Mechanic Pro (\$19.95; www.antontomov.com).

Modify the calendar to set working hours, change your Today screen's calendar view, change colors of scrollbars and toolbars, and manage security with EasyTweak (\$12; www.10gsoft.com). It can back up, undo, and reapply tweaks.

Do you frequently use the ALT-TAB combination to switch between documents and applications in Windows? You'll like David Andrš' tMan (free; pda.jasnapaka.com), a small task manager that lets you switch between and close applications. Another freebie from the developer is Batti, a customizable app that shows how much power remains in your battery. Also, check out pRuler to turn your mobile device into a ruler for measuring items in millimeters and inches.

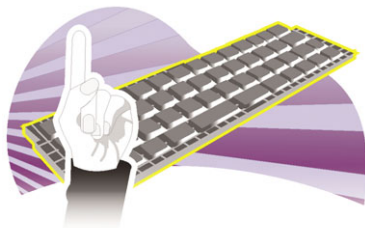


Easier Typing

How many times do you press a button only to miss? Phrase-It (\$19.95; www.prevalentdevices.com) provides eight keyboard layouts that increase the size of on-screen buttons and text display for easier typing with one finger or two thumbs.

Change the look of the on-screen keyboard with TenGO (\$24.95; www.tengo.net). This handy appli-

cation divides its character keys into six boxes. Users simply tap the box containing the letters of the word they wish to type instead of hunting and pecking each letter, and TenGO figures out which word to enter.



NEWSBRIEF

Google Grows

Everyone heard about Google's mega-expensive YouTube buyout last October, but two other acquisitions attracted less attention: Writely (formerly at www.writely.com), a Web service for composing, storing, and sharing word processing documents online; and JotSpot (formerly at www.jot.com), which lets multiple parties work on documents saved online as wikis. Writely had a more writerly feel, which made everyday consumers feel at home. JotSpot, on the other hand, seemed built with business in mind. Google has already moved Writely's users over to the recently launched Google Docs & Spreadsheets (docs.google.com), which brings together Writely's word processing features with the Google Spreadsheets service. According to JotSpot's old site, Google is likely to bring JotSpot's users into the Docs & Spreadsheets fold, as well.

by Calvin Clinchard

NEWSBRIEF

Boring? Nah

Think Excel spreadsheets. Now think PowerPoint presentations. Still awake? Impressive! Well, Crystal Xcelsius, maker of "data visualization" software for business, is out to change that sleepy impression with its new CX Now! (www.cx-now.com) software. CX Now! enables everyday users to transform spreadsheets into cool-looking, interactive PowerPoint slides. CX Now! is currently available as a free download.

by Calvin Clinchard

Cut Some Corners

Use Palm Shortcuts To Save Time & Taps

Keyboard shortcuts save a lot of time. Palm devices have a few similar tricks that can speed up your mobile-related activities. Try learning one shortcut at a time, until using them feels natural.

by Meryl K. Evans



Applications Menu

Get to your application faster by changing the main page to the List setting, which displays more programs but

requires little or no scrolling. Press the Home button to get to the Applications list. Press Menu, tap Options, tap Preferences, select List, and tap OK.

The Preferences screen also has a Remember Last Category checkbox. When checked, the last category that you viewed appears when you go back to the home page. Switch categories by tapping the Applications icon until you find the category you want. This works for the other buttons. Pressing the Calendar button multiple times displays different views. For Address Book and Task, you're taken through different categories.



Installing A New Program

You don't have to weave your way around your PC to find the PalmOne Quick Install application to add a new program to the Palm handheld. Instead, double-click the file and PalmOne Quick Install automatically opens and adds it to the queue.

Writing Shortcuts

Most PC shortcuts rely on CTRL, ALT, and SHIFT keystroke combinations. The same concept works on a Palm device. Instead of pressing a key, write a backslash (a slant from lower left upwards to the top right) followed by the shortcut letter. See the available shortcuts by tapping Menu and note the shortcut combinations displayed to the right of the menu item. Keep in mind that your device may not have a shortcut for every function.

Copy and Paste are two of the most frequently used shortcuts. To Copy, highlight the text. Next, make the backslash stroke. Finally, write a C. To Paste, repeat the first two steps from the Copy instructions, and then write a P.



Grab Contact Information While In Datebook, Tasks, Or Memos

If you need to contact someone to cancel an appointment shown in Datebook, you can use Phone Lookup from the Options menu instead of

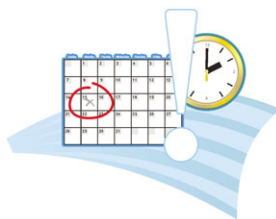
switching to Datebook. (Or, better yet, use the L shortcut.)

In Datebook, tap the person's last name or company name twice to highlight it. Tap Menu, Options, and Phone Lookup. The person's phone number or email address instantly appears in the appointment or memo. Keep in mind that this trick doesn't work with first names in Datebook's Location field.

If the listing for a contact doesn't appear in the Address Book, tap Cancel to return to Datebook or tap Add to enter the person's information into Address Book. If you have multiple phone numbers for a contact, the item in the Show In List field appears in the appointment, along with a W, H, M, or E indicating a work, home, or mobile phone number or an email address.

Change Task Date & Priority

You can change the date and priority of a Task without opening it. Go to Tasks and tap the priority number, and the numbers 1 through 5 appear. Tap the new priority number to change the Task's priority. The same steps work for the date column.



Speed Up New Appointment, Memo, Or Task Entry

Skip tapping New when entering a new item. In Datebook, pick the date and enter the first digit of the appointment time. For example, to enter a New Year's party, go to December 31 and write 7. 7:00 PM appears in the Start Time and 8:00 PM in the End Time. Write 3, and it becomes "7:30 PM." Datebook picks AM or PM based on the time you enter.

If the party starts at 7 a.m., write "7" and "A." Enter the rest of the party details.

In Memo and Tasks, just start writing, and a new memo or task will appear. The device saves you another step by capitalizing the first letter you enter.

Phrases

Phrases, time stamp, and date stamp have shortcuts, but instead of drawing a backslash, you'll write a cursive lower-case l. Tap Applications and then Prefs and select Shortcuts from the Personal menu to view the list of shortcuts for phrases. The shortcut for meeting is "me," so write a cursive, lower-case l followed by **me**, and "meeting" will appear. There might be a slight delay between writing the last letter and the appearance of the intended word.



Protecting Your Data

The wise thing to do is password-protect your device by requiring a password every time it's turned on. But who wants to enter a password every single time? Instead, create a shortcut for your password as you would any other phrase. After that, go to the Security screen. Tap Unassigned and

then enter the same text you used when you created the password shortcut. Tap Unassigned to enter the same text you entered in Shortcut. Enter a hint to help you remember your password in case of forgetfulness. Tap OK and re-enter your password to verify it. Tap OK to return to the main Security screen.

Tap the box under Auto Lock Handheld, enter your new password, and tap OK. Select when you want to automatically lock the handheld. Your choices are Never, On Power Off, At A Preset Time, and After A Preset Delay. Tap OK and Done. When your device asks for your password, enter the shortcut symbol followed by the shortcut name you created. After your entire password appears, tap OK.

NEWS BRIEF



Travel The World With Palm

Palm's newest Treo 680 smartphone has a quad-band (850/900/1,800/1,900MHz) GSM/GPRS/EDGE radio, which means you can use it around the world with a rate plan that allows for overseas roaming. Perhaps two of the most obvious differences between the 680 and other Treo models are an internal antenna and lighter battery, neither of which sacrifice performance.

Palm's U.S. retail and online stores will sell unlocked Treo 680s in your choice of four colors: arctic, copper, crimson, and graphite. This Palm OS based Treo comes with 64MB of user-available storage, almost three times that of the Treo 650 smartphone. In addition, the Treo 680 is compatible with the newly announced Google Maps and Traffic application, available as a free download. Other new features include a new phone user interface, improved Exchange ActiveSync synchronization, integrated contacts, full user guide on the phone, and wired car kit compatibility.

by Jennifer Johnson

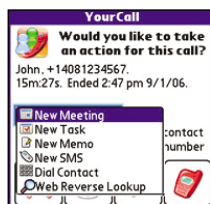
New & Updated Mobile Software

Stay Ahead Of The Mobile Curve With Current Software

Remember: Most of these applications allow you to try before you buy.

New Software Titles

What actions do you take after you end a phone call with your Treo? **YourCall For Palm OS** (\$9.95; www.iambic.com) gets to work as soon as you hang up so you can quickly and automatically take action, such as scheduling a meeting, creating a new task,



YourCall gets to work after a phone call.

or sending a SMS (Short Message Service). As soon as you select an action, YourCall enters the phone number, contact information, length of conversation, and other

phone call-related details.

VoiceMinder (\$9.95; www.pocketinformant.com) helps Windows Mobile Pocket PC and smartphone owners manage tasks by allowing them to record voice notes and send the note in an email to themselves. The whole process takes only two button presses: one to start recording, and another to stop the record and send the email. If your device isn't Internet-enabled, VoiceMinder saves the message and sends it at the next ActiveSync or Wi-Fi sync.

Users relying on TypePad for their blogging needs can now post entries and photos to their blogs with **TypePad Mobile** (get.typepad.com), an application available for Palm OS, Windows Mobile, and Nokia S60 devices.

SplashData extends **SplashID** (\$29.95; www.splashdata.com) to work with BlackBerrys. The popular password manager application protects data with

256-bit Blowfish encryption. The application also works with most handheld devices, PCs, and Macs. The desktop version makes it easier to add data and synchronize it with the BlackBerry and other devices.

BlackBerry users can track flights from over 80 airlines in real time with **WorldMate for BlackBerry Professional Edition** (\$59.95 Pro, \$34.95 Standard; www.mobimate.com/BlackBerry).



Check flight schedules in real time with WorldMate.

also includes a one-year subscription to real-time updates and tech support. WorldMate is available for other platforms, including Palm OS and Windows Mobile devices.

Create, edit, and view multiple calendars and contact lists and keep them in sync with your Palm OS device using **ClearSync** (\$59.95 Gold, \$19.95 Silver; www.clearsync.com), formerly known as WeSync. View calendars one at a time, side-by-side, or merged. ClearSync lets you wirelessly sync Palm handheld without a PC and share calendars over the Internet.

Symbian S60 Second Edition smartphone users can switch, close, and kill applications or close them all with one click using **Handy Taskman** (\$9.95; www.epocware.com). The application provides quick access to applications and information about running programs and memory.

IT professionals who use a BlackBerry or Windows Mobile device can remotely manage Windows servers with **SonicAdmin Suite** (www.avocentmobile.com), which consists of three solutions: SonicAdmin QR, SonicAdmin Pro, and SonicAdmin 4.1 Mobile Enterprise. Each solution offers different features, with SonicAdmin QR (\$99) being the most basic that allows administrators to view server statistics and event logs, shut down and reboot servers, manage processes and Active Directory user accounts, and run Quick Commands such as ping, Ipconfig, and Traceroute. SonicAdmin Pro (\$399 per year) has all the basics, plus Windows services management and file-related management. SonicAdmin 4.1 works with Unix and Linux servers and network components. Its license is based on a per-server basis, starting at \$200 per server.

Fans of Digg (www.digg.com) with a WAP-compatible browser can get their stories with **Digg Java Mobile** (www.b1te.com). Access the free download through your device's browser by visiting wap.b1te.com/dig. Users can filter stories based on Digg categories, bookmark stories for later reading, and email stories to their contacts. The application works with over 790 devices.

PLT (Perdiemco Location & Tracking) (www.perdiemco.com) software is a Windows Mobile GPS application for tracking your own and other's locations. You control who can see your trip and follow you. It works with a built-in camera to allow you to show someone a picture. Its capabilities also include group tracking, capturing a map, and creating a map. The application is free for personal use.



Receive the latest news with NewsGator Go!

NewsGator, FeedDemon, and Net-NewsWire users can take their feeds with them using **NewsGator Go! For Windows Mobile** (\$29.95; www.newsgator.com) and stay updated on news and information. NewsGator Go! syncs NewsGator products with your device.

Software Updates

Prices in parentheses are for full versions, unless otherwise stated.

Access Wikipedia's collection of over 900,000 entries with **Quickipedia** (\$14.95; www.standalone.com) for Internet-enabled Palm OS devices. The application lets you store previously viewed articles. Recent releases fix bugs and add new features of Web page caching and bookmarking for later reading.

Spb Diary (\$19.95; www.spbsoftwarehouse.com), a Windows Mobile Today plug-in from Spb Software House, gets updated to v2.0.2, adding photo contacts, one-hand navigation, special events tab, and skin support. Users with v1.x can upgrade for \$7.49. Financial manager application **Spb Finance 2.6** (\$12.45 for upgrades and \$24.95 for new users) has been updated to include support for Microsoft Money 2007 synchronization. The upgrade retails for \$12.45, and the new user edition costs \$24.95.

NVBackup v1.12 (free; www.free-warepalm.com/utilities/nvbackup.shtml)

runs a scheduled backup on a locked Palm OS device and has added security.

Monitor battery levels, memory and storage space, and tasks with **Fizz Monitor 3.0** (\$8.99 new, \$3.99 upgrade; www.fizzsoftware.com). The smartphone application now supports Windows Mobile devices.

RoadSync 2.0 For Palm OS (\$49.99; www.dataviz.com) contains wireless synchronization and security enhancements for Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, including direct push technology to automatically download emails to devices, global address list lookup, and added administrator features. The software supports Windows Mobile and Symbian devices.

Current Palm OS-based Datebk5 users who upgrade to **Datebk6** (\$12.95; www.pimlicosoftware.com) get more than a 100 new features. Feature highlights include sorting To Dos and a Today screen with multiple options, and an Alarm Manager function replaces the Next Alarm function.

Windows Mobile devices and smartphones with a built-in voice recorder gain more functionality with **VITO AudioNotes v1.2** (\$19.95; www.vitotechnology.com). The latest release lets users share voice notes by email and text messaging, sort recordings, and delete all recordings in one shot. Current users get free upgrades for one year after purchase.

The latest release lets users **share voice notes** by email and text messaging, **sort recordings**, and **delete all recordings in one shot.**



Remotely access files on PCs with Avvenu Mobile.

A Windows Mobile PIM (professional information management) application, **SoftX Secure Notes v2.6** (\$14.95; www.softx.org), receives a facelift with its new preview pane feature, allowing you to view contents quicker. Upgrades are free for one year after purchase.

Access your computer through your Palm OS device with **Avvenu v2.2** (free; www.avvenu.com). Versions 2.0 and later come with a My Media Play for accessing your music library. The new version adds an updater to allow users to automatically receive the latest features as soon as they're available.

Get more clock and alarm power than what comes with your Palm OS with **MobileCLOCK 3.900** (\$9.50; www.rmobil.ca), which also has a stopwatch. This release adds a new pop-up clock, makes it easier to create and delete events, and allows the user to use a flash drive for alarm sounds.

Those who want more power and features from their media player can get that in **Pocket Player 3.0** (\$19.95; www.conduits.com). The version adds video support, a new library engine, smart playlists, skins designed for Windows Media Player, and connection options.

by Meryl K. Evans

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Serious Cases For Your Mobile Gear

Just Bag It

by Marty Sems

Scuffs, spills, and airline jostles make notebook bags unpresentable long before they wear out. For many of us, a new case that will impress business partners is an annual purchase.

We tried out a cadre of contestants with an IBM ThinkPad T40. We liked different things about different bags, but none sailed through without raising an objection or two. For looks in the business

world, the Briggs & Riley, Mobile Edge, and Radian Technologies models will knock 'em dead. For value and comfort, however, Lowepro's Tropolis 1200 gets our nod.



Alienware Odyssey Messenger

Fits: 17-inch notebooks

Strap: solid, padded, straight, nonslip

Hardware: black polymer; cord loop zipper pulls

Fit/finish: very nice overall

Stands up when full: yes, but falls over easily

Price: \$79

Feel like carrying something weird? Alienware (www.alienware.com) has a notebook bag for you. The Odyssey Messenger is designed to complement the boutique PC designer's laptop line. The lightweight bag resembles the company's desktop fascias and features an alien head motif. In other words, you'll have to consider your colleagues before you bring it to a meeting.

This bag's cushy cradle is for 17-inch notebooks, period. There's no lateral adjustment beyond rolling up your Roswell T-shirt and stuffing it next to your PC.

The Odyssey Messenger has many oddly placed and shaped external pockets. Among the padded inner pockets are sleeves for bare CDs, DVDs, and game discs. As on a UFO, however, there isn't much space inside this bag once you pack your AC adapter and cables.

Mesh-covered padding makes the Odyssey Messenger more comfortable to carry. Unfortunately, the piping around the bottom corners rubbed on our leg as we walked. Also, the solid strap couldn't be made short enough for our tastes, and its sliding middle section's nonslip surface bunched up as it bent around our shoulder. We get the feeling that Alienware (and alien) fans won't mind.

This nylon roller case/overnight bag devotes half its space to a clothing compartment with elastic straps. At a couple of pounds lighter than the Briggs & Riley model we reviewed, and less than half its price, Targus' (www.targus.com) 17-inch Blacktop Roller Notebook Case is for the road warrior on a budget.

This Targus' telescoping handle just works. Opposite the wheels is a handle that makes it easier to maneuver the bag in an overhead compartment.

Removable pieces inside the case include a rigid CD/DVD card and a toiletries bag. There's also a belt holster for a cell phone, or perhaps an iPod mini or nano. The holster is accessible under the front flap, as is a two-pocket file fan.

The padded laptop cradle is big—almost too big. There literally was enough room for two ThinkPads like ours, or one fat desktop replacement notebook. You can adjust the width of the cradle, but the top strap really only holds laptops that are a minimum of 13 inches tall (front to back) in the bag. A bag intended for airline use should keep a computer relatively immobile, so you'll probably be packing additional clothing around your PC.

Targus isn't overly meticulous about the seams on this notebook case, and by now you know we're not crazy about solid, uninterrupted straps. At the end of the day, however, this roller is practical and affordable.

Targus 17-inch Blacktop Roller Notebook Case

Fits: about 14- to 17-inch notebooks; room for two

Strap: solid, padded, straight, nonslip

Hardware: black metal and polymer; plastic-tipped zipper pull tabs

Fit/finish: decent, but thread whiskers galore

Stands up when full: yes

Price: \$99.99



We've been looking forward to examining another Briggs & Riley (www.briggs-riley.com) bag. If you need to impress people with your notebook case, consider this brand.

The Ultimate Rolling Organized Computer Case is a roller brief that's roomy enough to double as an overnight bag. It's made of high-quality nylon with leather appointments. Its carry handles aren't comfortable to grip, but its shoulder strap is first-rate. The stretchy middle section interrupts the strap, meaning that the strap isn't a solid piece that continues through the padded middle. As a result, the strap doesn't thump your shoulder with every step. Likewise, the bag's tow handle is outstanding, and its wheels roll like a Cadillac's.

Briggs & Riley's Interlocking Handle System is a good idea. When you extend one roller bag's tow handle and stack a Briggs & Riley bag on top of it, you can lock the top bag to the bottom one. Tug the Briggs & Riley bag's interlocking handle and give it a twist, and the top bag won't fall off when you jump a curb or misjudge an escalator step. By the way, Briggs & Riley says this case's tow handle is strong enough for a 200-pound load.

The notebook cradle is actually a removable folio with thick padding, fleece lining, and a stretchy hook-and-loop strap. You can adjust the width with Briggs & Riley's trademark, easy-to-move, Velcro-like inserts. There are four main sections in the bag, including a three-part document fan and a compartment for power supplies, cords, and other support gear. Some pockets are padded and fleece-lined, as necessary, while others are mesh. There's also a quick-access pocket for airline tickets, plus a pop-up ID card holder on an elastic tether.

On the downside, the thing weighs 10 pounds empty. Also, we found a few stray threads, one crooked seam, and a few nylon pricklies on the strap. A \$349 bag should be free of even minor blemishes, like the \$169.99 Radian Maxwell we look at in detail later.

Briggs & Riley Travelware @work Ultimate Rolling Organized Computer Case

Fits: 17-inch notebooks or smaller

Strap: stretchy, very padded, interrupted, contoured

Hardware: classy, sculpted, pewter-colored metal; zippers a little stiff

Fit/finish: decent, but not perfect

Stands up when full: yes

Price: \$349



Lowepro Tropolis 1200

Fits: 17-inch notebooks or smaller

Strap: very padded, contoured, interrupted

Hardware: pewter colored metal; plastic-tipped zipper pull tabs

Fit/finish: average

Stands up when full: sometimes, but falls over easily

Price: \$69.99



Last March, we picked Lowepro's (www.lowepro.com) Tropolis 1300 as a best buy. Its little brother continues the tradition of high quality and thoughtful design at a fair price.

The 1200 is made of nylon with faux leather trim and rubber feet. Its carry handle is overstuffed with padding, and its underside is lined with breathable fabric for a comfortable carry. The main compartment opens 180 degrees to lie flat on a hotel bed, although you only have to unzip the section partway to remove your laptop.

The notebook cradle has a stretchy set of retention straps with oodles of adjustment. There's also a hook-and-loop divider for a custom fit. Elsewhere is a removable power supply pack, a smart two-pocket document file, and various padded pockets.

We like the fact that the strap is attached to its padded middle section, but doesn't continue through it. However, the outer edge of the contoured middle section flares up above the wearer's shoulder. Only a smidgen of the nonslip surface touches the shoulder, so the strap tends to slide.

Look past the plain-Jane appearance and consider the lifetime warranty, and the Tropolis starts to look like a smart choice.



Mobile Edge Premium Messenger

Fits: 15.4-inch notebooks

Strap: solid, unpadded, contoured; odd locking mechanism

Hardware: oversized black polymer; sculpted matte silver metal

Fit/finish: top-notch

Stands up when full: sometimes, but falls over easily

Price: \$69.99

Mobile Edge's (www.mobileedge.com) Premium Messenger is an attractive melange of textured fabric, rubber, ersatz leather, and padded mesh. Many of its features rock. Its Bluetooth Bunker, aka the Wireless Security Shield Pocket, blocks wireless transmissions to keep your PDA or smartphone safe from attack (or receiving harmless calls).

The Premium Messenger's front flap closes with hidden magnets, not noisy Velcro. This is a slimmer bag than the others we reviewed, so its interior pockets are few. However, an expansion gusset on the bottom unzips to add 40% more interior space. There's a waist belt, should you need one, although you can't remove the belt if you don't.

The bag's laptop cradle is amply padded, although its 14-inch width isn't negotiable. We could overlook this because the elastic top strap is fairly adjustable.

Once again, the main weakness of an otherwise nice Mobile Edge bag is its solid strap with an unpadded rubber middle section. The company's Bungee Comfort System in its V-Load and Premium Briefcases hasn't trickled down to this model yet. As it is, a loaded Premium Messenger's strap delivers unnecessary jars to your collarbone as you walk.

Speaking of unnecessary, the middle section of the strap has the same complicated locking mechanism we disliked in the past. The strap's overall length is easy to adjust with a toothy side buckle, but shortening it leaves a very visible and distracting loop of strap showing.

Still, you get good looks, imaginative features, and a lifetime warranty for \$69.99. That's the edge of this Mobile Edge.

The Maxwell (www.eradian.com) is distinctive. Chromed zipper tracks stand out against black leather as on Fonzie's jacket. Patterned fabric grasps your eyeballs and shakes them around. No matter how closely we looked, we couldn't find a defect.

This bag in the Soleil collection displays world-class craftsmanship, but it's apparent that its designer probably wasn't a daily laptop lugger. For example, its metal zipper teeth scratch your forearm when you rummage around in the bag. You'll feel those teeth a lot, too, because neither of the bag's two main sections opens very wide.

The Maxwell's carry handles felt fine in our hands, but they kept getting in the way when we opened the case. The shoulder strap is about as comfortable and slip-proof as the Briggs & Riley's, although it has the same angle problem as the LowePro's—that is, it's more suitable for carry by the opposite shoulder, running across the chest and back.

The Maxwell has reasonable, unpadded device pockets, including a detachable leather iPod/Treo slip case. Unfortunately, its nonadjustable cradle is only designed for one laptop form factor, namely 15 inches wide and 11 inches tall. In fact, our 12- x 10-inch ThinkPad slid back and forth as we tilted the bag. Short gel inserts augment the cradle's padding on the bottom and sides. The Maxwell has no rubber feet to protect the fabric from the pavement, but the bag stands up on its own.

In short, the Maxwell is more about form than function. It looks and smells great. It will impress people, as long as the people you're trying to impress don't have anything against leather. Radian gives buyers a two-year warranty.



Radian Technologies Soleil Maxwell

Fits: 15-inch notebooks

Strap: stretchy, very padded, interrupted, contoured

Hardware: chromed metal; leather-tipped zipper pull tabs;

zippers are a little stiff

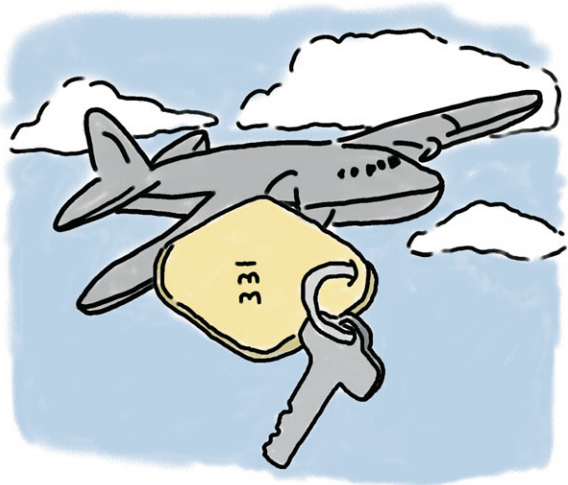
Fit/finish: outstanding

Stands up when full: yes

Price: \$169.99

Stay Where You Land

Hotels Are Finding New Homes In Airports



You've just had a long flight with all its usual, travel-oriented hassles. But instead of trudging wearily through several airport corridors, hailing a cab, and then threading through traffic to a downtown hotel, think about staying right at the airport where you land. Well, not exactly at the airport gate, but in one of the many luxurious, high-end hotels built into the terminal.

While airport hotels located near the runways have been around for a long time, there's a growing trend to build deluxe hotels on airport grounds, often right within the terminal. For example, the Hyatt Regency at the Orlando Airport, the Fairmont Vancouver Airport hotel in British Columbia, and the Grand Hyatt DFW at the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport combine luxury accommodations with the utmost in travel convenience. You don't have to worry about noise from the planes, either; all the hotels feature sound-proof rooms.

You can also reduce some of the stress of traveling by staying at an airport hotel the night before an early departure—and get a good night's sleep with the knowledge that getting to your gate on time will be a snap. As one example,

the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport hotel advertises that all airline gates are within a seven-minute walk from the hotel lobby. What could be easier than that?

But these hotels offer more than onsite convenience. While the amenities vary, as a rule they combine deluxe accommodations with state-of-the-art business services, including cutting-edge technology and thousands and thousands of feet of meet-

ing space. To sweeten the mix, some hotels include wide-ranging services oriented toward the leisure traveler, too—from spas to chef-prepared fine dining to fish freezers (no kidding). Let's take a look at a few of the choices available, using three well-known hotels as examples.

Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel

The Vancouver, British Columbia, area is renowned for its stunning natural beauty, and the Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel (www.fairmont.com/vancouverairport) leverages this famous setting to its advantage. If you stay at this hotel, you'll find plenty of floor-to-ceiling windows in the restaurants and lounges, perfect for viewing the North Shore Mountains. About half of the guest rooms also have mountain views; the other rooms include a partial ocean view.

Built in 1999, the hotel is new enough to incorporate amenities that appeal to both business and leisure travelers. Fairmont Vancouver Airport caters to business travelers by ensuring that they have luxurious, comfortable rooms, as well as all the high-tech equipment, rooms, and services they need to conduct

business while on the road. For example, each hotel room includes high-speed Internet access and a working desk; wireless Internet access is available in lobbies and lounges. Either way, Internet access costs \$20 per hour.

The hotel also maintains high-tech meeting rooms with technologically advanced equipment. Because the hotel's meeting rooms are literally located within an airport, attendees can minimize time away from the office.

Other amenities. To further enhance your stay, a health club and mechanized lap pool are open from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. to accommodate a variety of schedules. You can also treat yourself to the on-site spa. In addition to business services, you'll find amenities at this hotel that are definitely oriented toward Vancouver-area travelers. For example, the Concierge can arrange for area recreation opportunities, such as horseback riding, golf, skiing, or fishing. And if you happen to catch a prize salmon or halibut, you can use the Fairmont's 600-cubic foot fish locker to store it until your departure.

The hotel's upscale restaurant, *Globe@YVR*, provides fine dining on location. The cuisine features many local specialties and is prepared by a team of chefs, headed up by Chef David Wong. Chef Wong gained fame as the grand winner of the Bocuse d'Or National Selection Competition, so you know that the food will be great.

Rooms and suites. The Fairmont includes standard—and not-so-standard—guest rooms. In the “not-so-standard” category, you'll find that half of one floor is set aside as a “Quiet Zone,” where travelers suffering from jet lag or an overnight flight can sleep during the day without any of the usual hotel-related noise. In fact, if you simply need to catch an uninterrupted nap between flights, you can even rent these rooms by

The Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel takes good advantage of its pristine setting and spectacular views.



the hour. The Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel also maintains hypoallergenic rooms that minimize environmental allergens. To do so, they use filtered air, purified water, and feather-free pillows.

This hotel's top-tier (Fairmont Gold) accommodations are located on the 14th floor and include floor-to-ceiling windows so you can enjoy the panoramic, sweeping vistas. Designed for the elite traveler, these Fairmont Gold rooms represent a "hotel within a hotel," with a separate Concierge and lounge. An elaborate complimentary breakfast, as well as afternoon hors d'oeuvres, adds a touch of elegance for Fairmont Gold guests.

Lynn Gervais, Regional Public Relations Representative for Fairmont Hotels, aptly describes the property when she states, "A luxury hotel directly within the airport, the Fairmont Vancouver Airport has truly redefined the concept of airport accommodation, meetings, and dining."

Grand Hyatt DFW

The people and amenities at the Grand Hyatt DFW (granddfw.hyatt.com) help you feel at home, even in the midst of the immense Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. The Grand Hyatt DFW is conveniently

located right on airport grounds so you can easily access it using the airport's shuttle bus or its high-speed train. This hotel combines deluxe, comfortable accommodations, specialty foods and coffees, business services, and incredible



You can enjoy the blend of a modern, architecturally interesting setting with spectacular views and chef-prepared cuisine in the Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel's Globe@YVR restaurant. The Globe@YVR restaurant is run by award-winning Chef David Wong.

great attention to detail. In fact, the hotel has been ranked No. 1 (of 164 hotels) in the Dallas area according to TripAdvisor's Web site (www.tripadvisor.com).

The rooms at the Grand Hyatt DFW are spacious and comfortable so that you can rest after your travels. All rooms have high-speed wired and wireless Internet. As a nice security touch, each room is also equipped with a safe that is large enough to accommodate and recharge a laptop.

Events and meetings. The Grand Hyatt DFW also excels as a central meeting location. The huge (34,000 square foot) meeting room area is configurable, using a variety of room arrangements, to a total of 45 smaller rooms. Furthermore, the space includes cutting-edge technology that enables meeting participants to network worldwide and use live video streaming. To make event planning seamless, a dedicated convention staff is always available. Finally, the hotel maintains a fully staffed business center in the meeting room complex, complete with all the usual business services.

Bryan Davis, director of sales and marketing, sums up the hotel's meeting center amenities: "At the Grand Hyatt DFW, providing our customers with the latest technology to meet their business needs is a top priority. For our International customers or those doing business around the world, the Grand Hyatt DFW offers an onsite International Business Center, which is networked to enable our customers to gain access to locations across the globe. Through the Center, our guests can not only gain access to various sites, they can also utilize our Print on Demand service among other amenities to conduct their business. It is truly a unique offering that adds convenience and ease for our customers."

Other amenities. Interested in getting some exercise while on the road? Take advantage of the hotel's complimentary 24/7 fitness center. The fitness center's amenities make it (almost) easy to

work out. Not only does the rooftop fitness center have a wide range of exercise equipment and a heated pool, it also includes panoramic views of the Dallas /Fort Worth area. When you tire of looking at the skyline, you can watch cable TV on an individual LCD screen as you exercise.

You can also request a massage therapy session or a skin treatment at the hotel's spa. Furthermore, the Concierge can make arrangements for you to go to local attractions. One popular site is the Bear Creek Golf Club, located only five minutes from the hotel.

The Grand Met Restaurant provides a chef-prepared fare at all three meals, while Moka features specialty coffees and other drinks. As a nice touch, the Grand Met Restaurant includes a TV Bar, where solo travelers can view the morning news while eating breakfast.

Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport

With a beautifully landscaped, sunlit courtyard and a rich, warm decorating scheme, you just might think you're in a tropical paradise instead of in an airport terminal. But the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport hotel (orlandoairport.hyatt.com) elegantly incorporates its Florida location into its decorating scheme. In fact, this four-diamond hotel recently completed an extensive, \$10.2 million guest room renovation.

The hotel's location is also unique, as the airport terminal and the hotel share the same courtyard. Half of the hotel's rooms overlook the atrium, and the other rooms have floor-to-ceiling views of the runways.

The hotel's at-airport location alone provides great motivation for staying there. Discounting the time necessary to get through security, you can be at any of the departure gates in a mere seven minutes. And because of the hotel's interterminal site, you can even view the status of the security lines from the hotel and plan your time accordingly. If you prefer shopping, you can easily access the 40-plus shops that are located in the airport's terminal, including chains such as Borders and Starbucks.

Luxurious accommodations. Steve Garner, director of sales for the hotel, states, "I think most travelers, staying with us for the first time, are amazed by the level of service and amenities that Hyatt provides. Our goal is quite simple: We're constantly striving to make Hyatt Regency Orlando Airport the best airport hotel in the country."

To fulfill their mission, the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport starts by providing 446 sound-proofed, comfortable guest rooms, each with rich, upgraded bedding. You can choose from a variety of room arrangements and amenities, ranging from a simple two-bed

course, the location of the meeting center within the airport makes it quick and easy for business travelers to efficiently attend the meetings.

Restaurants and other amenities. The hotel also features two restaurants (casual and upscale) to accommodate a wide variety of tastes. McCoy's provides casual dining, while Hemisphere features chef-prepared, upscale cuisine. As an added benefit, the Hemisphere restaurant is located on the ninth floor, where you can view runways from the floor-to-ceiling windows. The quality of the food is evidenced by the fact that many local residents frequent the Hemisphere.



The Grand Met Restaurant includes chef-prepared meals, as well as a TV bar.

room to conference and business suites. The VIP suite, for example, includes a 1,200 square foot suite with a parlor, kitchenette, and other amenities. Each of the guest rooms includes complimentary wireless Internet access; for \$9.99, you can also use a high-speed hard-wired connection for a 24-hour period.

Meeting and business areas. To make it easy to hold business meetings, the Hyatt Regency Orlando International Airport provides more than 42,000 square feet of meeting space, which is divisible into a total of 34 meeting rooms. Additionally, the hotel has a 150-person amphitheater. Each meeting room incorporates state-of-the-art technology. Of

Finally, you can get a workout at the fitness center, which is open 24/7 to accommodate virtually any flight or meeting schedule. As an alternative to working out on a treadmill or a rowing machine, you can take a dip in the heated rooftop pool as you casually watch planes take off and land.

It Beats Napping At Your Gate

Next time your travels take you to an airport, don't even leave the terminal. Instead, check out the amenities at one of the high-end airport hotels. Who knows? You just might enjoy your stay so much that you decide to take your next vacation there.

by Linda Bird

K.I.S.S.: Keep It Simple Syndication

The Best In RSS . . . & Dangers To Avoid

As the Web grows, so does the number of Web sites in which we become interested. We're compelled to check our favorite pages daily (if not more often); otherwise, we might miss something. If only there were ways to get updated content without having to actually visit each individual site. Well, we're in luck, because such a tool actually exists. RSS, or Really Simple Syndication, is a system designed to allow users to subscribe to the pages or Web sites that they visit most often. Webmasters or site

administrators can provide content in a standardized format that any number of different RSS readers can read.

These readers or "aggregators" come in many different formats, some of which we'll discuss below, that comb your subscribed Web sites to find the latest and greatest that the sites have to offer. Readers can be either stand-alone programs that work with a Web browser like Internet Explorer (www.microsoft.com/windows/ie) or Firefox (www.mozilla.com/firefox), while

others are Web-based, which require no software installation, but are only available on a computer with an Internet connection. Below, we'll discuss a little bit of the "nuts and bolts" of how to subscribe and read an RSS feed, cover a few of the dangers and tips for reading RSS feeds safely, some RSS applications for mobile device users, and finally, we'll cover a few of the more popular RSS feeds that might come in handy for business travelers or executives on the road. *by David Miller*

RSS 101

RSS is an acronym that corresponds to a group of standards. In addition to Really Simple Syndication, RSS also stands for Rich Site Summary and RDF Site Summary, and are specified in XML (Extensible Markup Language). XML is a data format that is widely used when there is no set standard format for data. In other words, XML is a way of describing data that is usable by many different types of programs. This feature makes it perfect for a Web feed.

Content distributors who constantly update the content on their sites often use Web feeds. The Web feed is

syndicated, which allows users to subscribe by clicking a link on the provider's page. Once subscribed, the user simply installs an aggregator program, or reader, the sole purpose of which is to browse the subscribed streams to find new content. When new content is available, the aggregator either downloads the content to a user's local computer or sends the user some kind of message (email, IM, or text message) notifying him of the most up-to-date subscribed content.

Because they follow the XML file format, RSS reader programs are available on many different operating

systems. The real beauty is that with the exception of the installation of the reader program, they take little or no effort on the part of the user to operate. As long as the content provider formats the content as XML, the system works fine. Simply download an appropriate reader or create an online account for the content you want, find a Web site or news service that offers RSS feeds, and then subscribe. That's about it. The RSS aggregator program will periodically check in with subscribed pages and download updates or notify you of their existence so that you can read them when you're ready. Think of

them as your own personalized newspaper.

Aggregators check subscribed feeds periodically for new content, which is then either downloaded or sent via email or instant message to the end user. Some aggregator programs actually poll different sites, while others can register to "clouds." These clouds are Web services some providers offer that notify aggregators when new content is uploaded to their Web sites. This helps the Web site providers preserve bandwidth by eliminating the need for RSS readers to actively poll their Web sites for new content.

How To Read

Just like there are many RSS feeds out there, there are also many types of readers out there, and you'll need to decide which is right for you. As a rule, any reader that can access XML feeds functions as an RSS aggregator, however, there are other things to consider.

Google Reader. Google (reader.google.com) offers an RSS reader. The Google Reader is a free online reader that allows you to search for content from across the Web. First, you'll need to create an account by clicking Sign In at the top-right corner of the Google home page and then clicking Create An Account Now. (If you already have a Google account, simply log in at the Google Reader home page.) Once you've logged in, type in a keyword or



After setting up an account with Google Reader, you can use the powerful searching and sorting tools from Google to manage your RSS (Really Simple Syndication) subscription content.

phrase and click search. Google Reader returns a list of candidates matching your description. All you have to do is subscribe; Google Reader will place the newest content on your Reader home page. As with other Google content, you can sort results by read status or customizable labels, as well as share the results with other users.

NewsIsFree. Somewhat deceptively named, NewsIsFree (www.newsisfree.com)

is another online news reader that will allow you to sign up for an account to view RSS feeds. A number of core features (news reader, news search, email alerts, and headlines) are available to subscribers for free, but for \$25 per year, you'll get expanded features (such as weather reports and blogging tools), as well as the elimination of advertisements.

In addition to online RSS aggregators, there are

some programs that require installation on your desktop. One such program is FeedReader (www.feedreader.com). This small open-source program operates without adware or spyware and will run in the background, collecting updates from all of your RSS feeds and arranging them by source, date, or ID tag. Also, because it's open-source, it's customizable and adaptable to your future needs.

Mobile RSS



If you're not one to carry a laptop around with you but don't want to miss your news while you're away from your desktop, never fear—there are solutions for you, as well. Several companies are beginning to offer software for late-model mobile devices, such as smartphones, cell phones, or PDAs. Ask.com's Bloglines (www.bloglines.com) is an online RSS aggregator that runs on either your computer or mobile device and doesn't require you to download any software. Just create a free account, log on, and select the content you want to access.

Another type of mobile RSS feeder is called Litefeeds (www.litefeeds.com). This software, unlike Bloglines, requires you to download and install a program to your desktop and mobile device, but then allows you to pick and choose which of your feeds you want to port to your mobile device. The rest are available on your desktop, but will not clutter up your mobile device. You can also choose to receive email alerts for certain feeds, so you'll always know what kind of news is waiting for you.

Worthwhile News Feeds

We've already talked about the many different types of content that are available; you have probably seen "Subscribe To RSS" links or any number of icons on your favorite Web sites. If you already have some subscriptions in mind, have at 'em! Here are our recommendations.

The Wall Street Journal Online. If you're financially minded, chances are you're a subscriber to *The Wall Street Journal* (www.wsj.com). The newspaper's subscriber-only articles are available at The Wall Street Journal Online (online.wsj.com), which offers more than a dozen XML feeds covering a range of topics including world news, U.S. business and market news, personal technology and health news, and more.

Weather.com. Will the latest tropical storm hit Florida or Texas? Should I bring

shorts for my afternoons off in San Francisco, or stick with a jacket? You can answer these and many other questions with the RSS feeds from The Weather Channel (www.weather.com). You can opt to subscribe to weather reports from just your local region or for the entire nation, as well as The Weather Channel Blog. All you need is the right reader, and you'll know what changes are blowing in the wind.

USA Today (www.usatoday.com) is a newspaper that was specifically designed for business travelers. By subscribing to any one of dozens of different RSS feeds, you can make the news you get even more specific. With feeds for top headlines, health, sports, money and travel, entertainment news, and technology (just to name a few) there is no limit to how much information is available at your

fingertips—without having to lift those fingers to look for them.

CNN.com. The world is a volatile place. World events can change in the blink of an eye, and with an RSS news feed from CNN (www.cnn.com) you'll be one of the

first to know. CNN.com offers feeds for its top stories, U.S. and world news, politics, and technology. Subscribing to these feeds is like having an anchor sitting on your lap(top).



Dangerous RSS?

Like so many other aspects of our increasingly digital world, RSS is not without its dangers. Due to its increase in popularity, hackers have begun to investigate ways to exploit the simple nature of RSS. In many RSS readers, there is an "enclosure" field to which content providers can attach any of a number of different files, such as MP3s, text documents, or PDFs. Originally intended to provide users with additional information or

convenience, this feature is now exploited by the inclusion of malicious software such as viruses, spyware, and worms. If he's not careful, the casual RSS user might unknowingly download a piece of malware and infect his computer.

The keyword, of course, is "unknowingly." As with email attachments, users should be cautious of what they're downloading. Most first-generation RSS aggregators automatically download

enclosures regardless of the file type or its source. Now that the problem is becoming more prevalent, RSS aggregator developers are beginning to include some security features in new versions of RSS browsers, such as filters, safe lists, and warnings related to specific file types. If you're using an older RSS reader that doesn't include any safety features or automatically downloads all enclosures, you should think about either updating

or changing the program you use.

As with all other online security risks, discretion is the key. Only subscribe to providers you trust and make sure that you don't allow your RSS reader to unilaterally download content without your knowledge. And, as always, make sure that your antivirus software is up-to-date and running properly to eliminate any malicious files that happen to make it through.

Block The Bad Stuff

GreenBorder Pro Protects While You Surf

GreenBorder Pro With SafeFiles 2.9.2

\$29.95 (includes one-year subscription) • Green Border Technologies
www.greenborder.com

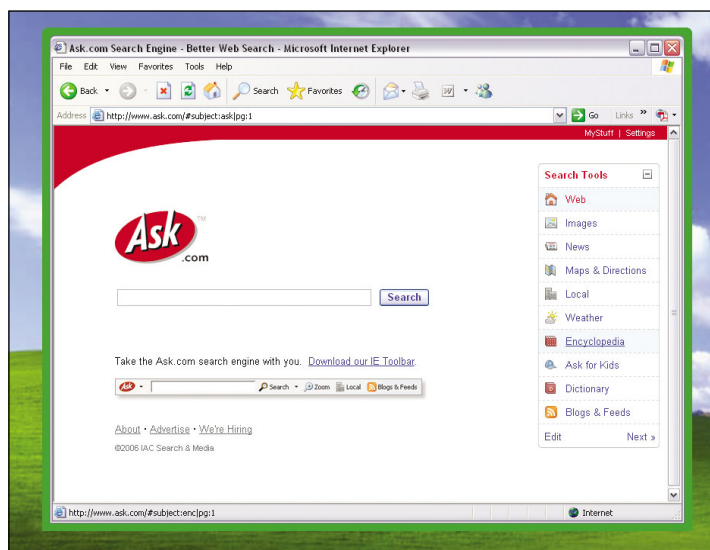
GreenBorder Pro offers a unique take on Internet security. Instead of scanning each file as it comes in or detecting a malicious threat after it may have already done the damage, GreenBorder sets up a virtual environment in which the Web browser, instant messenger, and even a USB drive can operate. It's like those Hazmat tents that the guys in Cellophane suits always set up in the movies.

Installation is simple, requiring a system restart before the signature green square appears in the System Tray. From then on, GreenBorder offers a helpful Flash tutorial and informative pop-ups each step of the way. After installing the software, I simply launched the Firefox Web browser to activate it.

When launched with GreenBorder running, Firefox and Internet Explorer open with a literal green border around the application window. From then on, GreenBorder blocks any rootkits, malware, and viruses, showing them a virtual environment instead of the real thing. Any failed attempt by external bugs to modify my PC via my browser resulted in GreenBorder displaying a warning pop-up. The software even served up a prompt whenever I tried to attach a document to an email. Selecting the Clean And Reset option rids this

virtual environment of any accumulated malware and restarts the browser with a clean environment.

GreenBorder also offers an additional level of protection called the Privacy Zone, this one with a yellow border.



GreenBorder Pro puts a visual border around your Web browser and other application windows to indicate that the software is preventing malware from infiltrating your computer.

When activated, the Privacy Zone closes all GreenBorder-protected programs. This protection is useful when entering credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, and other sensitive information, and thus is ideal for online shopping and banking. When I was finished trying this out at my online bank, I clicked End Privacy Zone and all traces of my banking experience were erased.

The GreenBorder Web site claims that I can visit any Internet site, download

anything, and be completely protected inside the GreenBorder shell. The program also doesn't need regular maintenance or updating; for example, it doesn't go after specific threats, so it doesn't need to periodically install virus definitions. Note, however, that GreenBorder doesn't do anything to protect against any threats that might already reside on a computer, only malware that appears after installation.

"GreenBorder creates a protective environment: a 'bubble' in your PC," says Jim Fulton, vice president of marketing for Green Border Technologies. "The upshot of it is you're literally able to go anywhere, download anything, and download any attachment without anything breaking into your PC. Nothing is left around on your PC for hackers or malicious code to steal later. We're able

to make it safe for you to go anywhere on the Web, protect your privacy, and make it so you can literally look at or use any Web mail attachment as well as any file you receive over email, instant messaging, or USB stick."

A bit of confusion arises regarding the SafeFiles add-on. SafeFiles allows me to save an email attachment anywhere and still benefit from GreenBorder protection each time the file is opened. The help files mention SafeFiles as if it requires a separate purchase and installation, often discussing SafeFiles features in a

"Note" at the bottom of a help topic. However, GreenBorder and SafeFiles are installed all at once, and SafeFiles is now integrated into the main product. The documentation has not yet been vetted to reflect that fact.

Regardless of documentation inconsistencies, GreenBorder is an inexpensive security choice that provides excellent online protection against future threats.

by Steve Horton

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Solve Wireless Internet Connection Problems

AS THE BUSINESS TRAVELER is inundated with airport terminals, coffee shops, and hotels offering public wireless Internet, you may find that locating a hotspot is the easy part. If you find yourself floundering while trying to connect, try these troubleshooting tips.

by Andrew Leibman



Go Hotspot Hopping

If several hotspots exist in the same general vicinity, you may need to specify the network to which you want to connect. To view the available wireless networks, right-click the Network Connections icon in the System Tray and click View Available Wireless Networks. Click Advanced to open the Wireless Network Connection Properties dialog box. Next, select the wireless network's SSID (Service Set Identifier) from the list of available

networks that appears on the Wireless Networks tab.

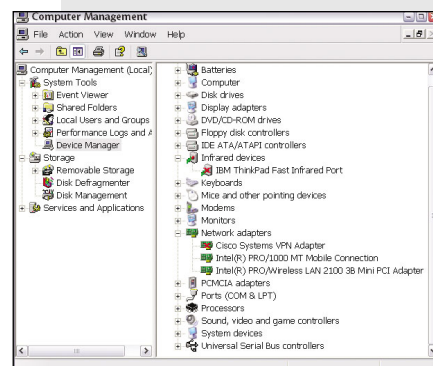
Click the network you want to connect to and select the Allow Me To Connect To The Selected Wireless Network, Even Though It Is Not Secure checkbox. Next, click the Connect button at the bottom of the dialog box to continue. If you aren't sure which network you want to connect to or you don't see the network you're looking for, click the Advanced button. From this dialog box, you can rescan for the available wireless networks by clicking Refresh.

Windows 2000 users don't have a utility designed to detect and configure

wireless networks. As a result you need to use the software that came with your wireless adapter or an application provided by the wireless IP. For example, if you have Intel's PRO/Wireless network adapter and the PROSet profile management software, you can double-click the Intel PROSet icon and select your wireless adapter from the left pane of the General tab. Click the Networks tab and click Scan. A list of Available Networks appears and displays the SSID names of the available networks. Select the network from the list and click Connect.

Connection Checklist

✓ Before connecting to a hotspot, make sure you have the correct hardware. Most newer notebooks come with integrated wireless adapters. If you have an Intel Centrino notebook, then you have an 802.11b or 802.11g wireless adapter and should have little trouble connecting to most public hotspots. If you're not sure, check your device for an 802.11-compliant WLAN (wireless local-area network) adapter.



✓ Some wireless-capable devices state the 802.11 compliance on the bottom or back of the device. You can also check whether you have a wireless adapter by consulting Device Manager. In Windows XP, click Start, right-click My Computer, and select Manage. Click Device Manager to see a list of the devices installed on your system. Win2000 users can right-click My Computer, click Properties, and select the Device Manager tab. Click the plus sign (+) in front of the network adapters. You should see a wireless adapter, but if you don't and your notebook has a PC Card slot, then you can add wireless Internet capabilities with a PC Card or a mini-PCI WLAN card.

Does Your OS Have The Right Support?

Make sure your operating system is up-to-date. Most wireless IPs only support a limited number of OSes or just specific versions of a particular OS. Depending

on the wireless IP, some browsers are not supported and may not properly display the splash page, the Web page that lets you sign in to the

hotspot's Internet service. Check with the wireless IP offering the wireless hotspot for details on which browsers it recommends for best viewing.

Make Sure Your Adapter Can "Talk" With The Hotspot

When troubleshooting a connection, make sure your wireless adapter can "talk" to the hotspot.

If the adapter is communicating with the hotspot, often all you need to do is launch a Web browser. (In some instances you may need to sign in on the wireless IP's login page.)

But if there is no communication, check that your computer's hardware is compliant with the hotspot's hardware. For example, if your notebook has an 802.11b wireless adapter, you can connect to other 802.11b or backward-compatible 802.11g hotspots. The same notebook can't connect to an 802.11a hotspot, however, because

that specification isn't backward-compatible with 802.11b/g devices.

To get your WLAN adapter to communicate with the hotspot hardware, your adapter must be turned on. The Wireless Network Connections icon in your System Tray will appear to communicate if the adapter is working. If an X appears over the wireless adapter icon, then the device isn't enabled. Right-click the Network Connections System Tray icon, click Open Network Connections, and double-click Wireless Network Connection to enable your device's WLAN adapter. If there isn't a Network Connections icon in the System Tray, WinXP

users can click Start, select Control Panel, and double-click Network Connections. In Win2000, click Start, select Settings, and click Control Panel. Double-click Network And Dialup Connections, right-click your wireless network connection, and select Enable.

WinXP users may see a pop-up stating that no wireless networks are available. About a minute later another pop-up should appear stating that one or more wireless networks are available. Click the pop-up to see the Wireless Network Connection dialog box and a list of available wireless networks as SSIDs. The SSID is a name that identifies a specific network.

Check Your Drivers



From the Device Manager, you can check the status of your WLAN drivers to make sure the device is working properly. If the Device Manager shows a yellow circle and an exclamation point next to your wireless adapter, then your wireless adapter may not be properly installed. Right-click the adapter in question, select Properties, and look at the Device Status box on the General tab to see that the adapter is working properly. If necessary, select the Driver tab in the Properties dialog box to access controls that let you uninstall or update the driver. If you see a red X by your wireless adapter, the device is either disabled or your system can't recognize it. Right-click the adapter and select Enable. If this doesn't eliminate the red X, then you may need to replace your wireless adapter.

How To Ensure A Proper Configuration

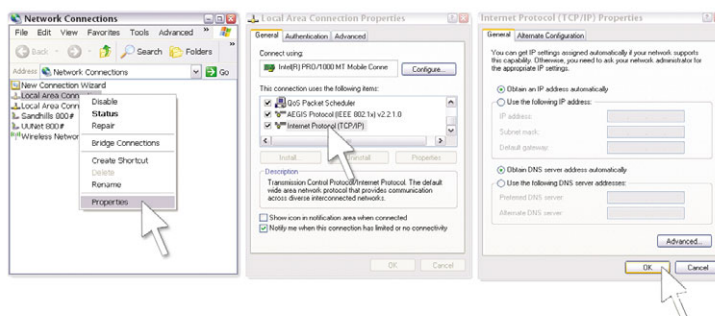
Oftentimes, you can encounter connection problems simply because your notebook isn't properly configured. You need to set up your notebook to automatically obtain an IP (Internet Protocol) address and DNS (Domain Name System) address. These sets of numbers refer to the address of a computer on a network and the system for translating IP addresses into domain names. Your wireless device must be able to determine both addresses to connect to a hotspot.

If you're using WinXP, you can configure your device by right-clicking the Network Connections icon from the System Tray and then clicking Open Network Connections. Right-click Local Area Connection and

select Properties. Scroll to and select Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), and then click Properties. Open the General tab and select the Obtain An IP Address Automatically and Obtain DNS Server Address Automatically radio

buttons. Click OK when you're done.

Win2000 users can click Start, select Settings, and click Network And Dialup Connections. Next, right-click the wireless LAN connection, click Properties, scroll to and select Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), and then click Properties. On the General tab, select the Obtain An IP Address Automatically and Obtain DNS Server Address Automatically radio buttons. Click OK to close the dialog box.



Can't Open That File



YOU'VE BEEN ON THE ROAD all week working on a major business deal. It's about to all come together, but you're waiting on the final proposal. When you check your email, you see that it has finally arrived. And as thoughts of your impending promotion swim in your head, you realize that they've sent you a WordPerfect file. The problem? You don't have WordPerfect installed on your notebook, and when you try to open the file, all you get is gibberish.

Before you throw anything in frustration, stop, take a deep breath, and consider downloading a file viewer to make your troubles go away. Although you may have limited access to the file's contents, the information you need will be readable with minimum effort.

For a variety of quick fixes, you need look no further than Microsoft's download Web site (www.microsoft.com/downloads). The following describes two viewers that you will most likely need and step-by-step directions on how to download and use each of them.

by Joy Martin

Word Viewer 2003

For viewing nearly any type of word processing document, you'll want to download Word Viewer 2003. This nearly 12MB download will allow you to view, print, and copy documents saved in any number of formats, including certain versions of Word, rich text format, WordPerfect, Works, and XML, and you don't need to have Word previously installed for it to work. You won't, however, be able to edit, save, or create documents with this program. The file will take between two minutes (T1 connection) and 29 minutes (56Kbps [kilobits per second] dial-up connection) to download.

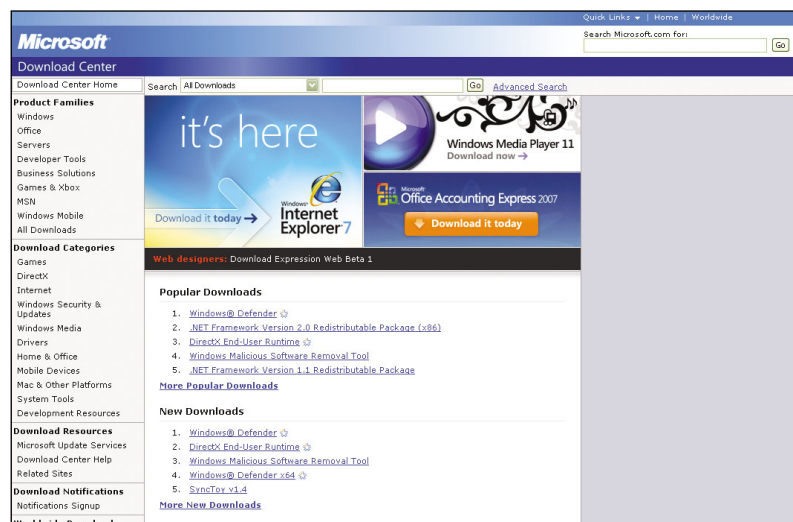
Using the Search option on the Download Center home page, type **Word Viewer 2003** in the text box and click Go. From the Results page, click the Word Viewer 2003

link, which will display a summary page with an overview of functions and compatible file formats and complete instructions on downloading and using the viewer. Once you've decided that this is the viewer you need, click the Download button near the top of the page to get started.

Although the downloading process should automatically begin, you can follow the directions on the next page if there is a delay. To install and launch the viewer immediately, click Open in the installation window.

After reviewing the EULA (End User License Agreement), click the I Accept The Terms In The License Agreement checkbox and click Next to launch the Setup window.

You will be given the choice to install the program in the default location (in our case, C:\PROGRAM FILES\MICROSOFT OFFICE) or click Browse to use the Select A Destination



From Microsoft's Download Center home page (www.microsoft.com/downloads), you can search for viewers and converters by searching the categories listed on the left of the home page or using the Search option. You can also see what other people are downloading by checking out the Popular Downloads list.

Folder option. If you would like to change the destination, select the desired folder and click OK to continue the installation process. Because we wanted to save to the default location, we clicked the Install button to continue. When the installation is complete, click OK.

To test out the Word Viewer 2003 utility, we created a WordPerfect file and

saved it on a computer that didn't have WordPerfect or Word installed. To retrieve our file, we opened the Windows Start menu, clicked Programs, and selected Microsoft Office Word Viewer 2003 from the resulting menu. The program will launch directly to an Open display window where you can select the file you need to open. In order for

our file to appear we selected All Files (*.*) from the Files Of Type drop-down menu. We navigated our way through the Desktop folders and found the file, which was named WP12test.wpd. We clicked the corresponding file to highlight it and then clicked Open to access the file's contents.

We were able to access the file in question, but as stated

before, we were only able to view, print, and copy the document. In order to have more flexibility with the document, we used the key combination CTRL-A to highlight all of the text. We then copied it onto the Clipboard by pressing CTRL-C and pasted the text into a WordPad document using CTRL-V. We were then free to save and edit the resulting document.

Excel Viewer 2003

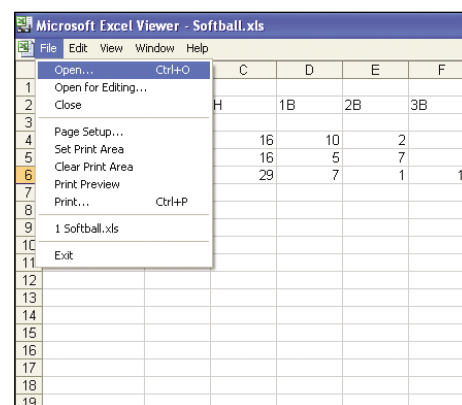
If you need to check out a spreadsheet but don't have Excel on your notebook, Excel Viewer 2003 will be able to assist. The almost 10MB download will enable you to open Excel 97/2000/2002/2003 spreadsheets and workbooks. Although you won't be able to edit, save, or create files, you will be able to open, view, and print. You can also copy and paste the data in another program for editing. This file will take between 1.5 minutes (T1 connection) and 25 minutes (56Kbps dial-up connection) to download.

To locate the file, type **Excel Viewer 2003** in the Search text box on the Download Center home page and click Go. Click the Excel Viewer 2003 link to view the summary page. Similar to the Word Viewer 2003 page, you'll see an overview and complete download and usage instructions. To download the viewer, click the Download button near the top of the page.

The download process for Excel Viewer 2003 is just like Word Viewer 2003. Click Open to install the program immediately. After reviewing and accepting the EULA, click Next to begin Setup. Again, we chose to install the program in the default location, so we clicked Install.

To start Excel Viewer 2003, click the Windows Start menu, click Programs and then Microsoft Office Excel Viewer 2003. Click File and select Open from the drop-down menu to open the correct file. Once we located the file, we clicked the file name and then clicked Open. Although you will be unable to do anything but read the data, you can copy and paste the information into another program if necessary.

Microsoft has also made a security update available for Excel Viewer 2003. To learn more about the vulnerability it



Because of the limited access granted by a viewer, the File drop-down menu has fewer options than in a full version of Excel.

patches or to download it for free, go to www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=7DBADB1-0542-475B-91B5-90DD2AF2C0FC&displaylang=en or search for article KB 914451 on the Microsoft Help And Support Web site.

Beyond The Basics

If you find yourself in need of a viewer that we didn't cover here, you can use the Search For A Download option on Microsoft's Download Center home page to search by Keyword or Product/Technology. You can also browse the Download Categories list that runs along the left side of the page. And for more access to your files, consider searching for

a file converter that will actually open the file in question in a format you can access completely. Once you know about viewers and converters, no matter what type of file is thrown your way, chances are there's a way to open it that is just a download away. You might not have access to the file's full range of options, but every little bit helps.

Fast Number-Crunching With Excel



AS MUCH AS WE HATE to admit it, creating and editing formulas in Excel has stumped us from time to time. Figuring out what these formulas do and how to use them can quickly become a source of frustration if you're in a hurry, or have no clue what the formula is asking for or trying to do. Read on for help to decipher some of the commonly used formulas in Excel. We used Excel 2003 for this article but our advice works with most other versions.

by Jennifer Johnson

First Things First

In order to manipulate data in Excel, you must understand the basic format that all formulas in Excel use. Every formula begins with an equal (=) sign. A number, cell reference, or function follows. To specify a range of cells to use in a function, enter the following: *firstcell:lastcell*, where *firstcell* represents the first cell in the range and *lastcell* represents the last cell in the range. To enter multiple cells that are not in a sequential range, separate each of the individual cell names with a comma. In formulas that require multiple parameters or that use nested functions, you will need to enclose a listing of multiple non-sequential cells and other operations in parentheses.

Add A Block Of Numbers

One of the functions we use most in Excel is the SUM function, which lets you add a group of numbers. You can use this function with numbers alone, but many times it's more helpful to add all of the numbers in a range. To use the SUM function, enter **=SUM(range)**, where *range* represents the group of cells you wish to add.

Simple Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication & Division

If all you want to do is add, subtract, multiply, or divide a few numbers, a simple formula is all you need. To add numbers, use the plus (+) sign; to subtract, use the minus (-) symbol; to multiply, use an asterisk (*); to divide, use a forward slash (/). To use a simple formula that adds three numbers, for example, you would enter **=1+2+3** into the formula bar.

Average A Range Of Numbers

The AVERAGE function calculates the arithmetic mean of a group of numbers. Excel does this by adding the group of cells and then dividing by total number of cells. To calculate the average of a group of numbers, enter **=AVERAGE(range)** into the Excel formula bar, where *range* represents the group of cells for which you wish to formulate an average.

Use Data From A Cell

Instead of manipulating hard coded data, you may want to perform calculations by referencing a number from a cell. To do so, use the same formula for simple calculations, but replace the numbers with cell references. For example, to multiply the number in cell A2 by the number in cell D6, enter **=A2*D6**.

Round Data

Excel has three functions that let you round data. To round data in a traditional sense, with numbers less than 0.5 rounding down and the rest rounding up, use the ROUND function. To round a number down to the nearest whole number, use the ROUNDDOWN function. Likewise, to round a number up to the nearest whole number, use the ROUNDUP function. All three of these commands use the same format: **=ROUND(number, numberofdigits)**, where *number* is the number or cell you wish to round and *numberofdigits* specifies the number of decimal places to use in rounding. A negative *numberofdigits* rounds to the left of the decimal point, and zero rounds to the nearest integer.

Determine Minimum & Maximum

If you want to know the minimum or maximum value from a list of numbers, use the MIN and MAX functions. The format for the MIN and MAX functions is as follows: =MIN(*range*) or =MAX(*range*). Alternatively, if you want to know the *n*th largest or smallest number, you can use the SMALL and LARGE functions. To find the second smallest number in a range from A2 to A73, type =SMALL(A2:A73, 2). To find the fourth largest number, type =LARGE(A2:A73, 4).

Multiple Functions In One

Many times, you'll see multiple Excel functions combined in one longer function. For example, the following statement combines multiple functions: =IF(AVERAGE(F2:F5)>50, SUM(G2:G5),0). In this IF function, the first parameter uses the AVERAGE function combined with a test to see if the average of a group of numbers is greater than 50. The second parameter uses a SUM function to add a group of cells if the first parameter is true. The final parameter sets the value of the IF statement to zero if the first parameter is false.

Count Data

Instead of counting the number of cells containing a specific value manually, use the COUNT and COUNTIF functions. The COUNT function counts the number of cells in a list that contain numbers. To use this function, type =COUNT(*range*). To count the number of cells based on a condition, such as the number of times an invoice value less than a specific dollar amount appears, type =COUNTIF(*range*, *criteria*), where *criteria* specifies which data is to be included in the count.

Convert Data From One Measurement To Another

You can use Excel to convert data from one measurement to another. To use the CONVERT function, enter =CONVERT(*number*, "*from*", "*to*"), where *number* represents the number or cell you wish to convert, *from* represents the original measurement, and *to* represents the converted unit of measurement. For example, to convert 18 degrees Celsius to Fahrenheit, you would type =CONVERT(18,"C","F").

Some of the most common values of measurement to use in the CONVERT function are listed. (NOTE: You must enter the quotation marks in the formula.)

Gram	"g"
Meter	"m"
Statute mile	"mi"
Inch	"in"
Foot	"ft"
Yard	"yd"
Hour	"hr"
Minute	"mn"
Second	"sec"
Degree Celsius	"C"
Degree Fahrenheit	"F"
Teaspoon	"tsp"
Tablespoon	"tbs"
Fluid ounce	"oz"
Cup	"cup"
U.S. pint	"pt"
Quart	"qt"
Gallon	"gal"
Liter	"l"

Additional formats for other units of measurement are available from Microsoft Office Online at office.microsoft.com/enus/assistance/HP052090221033.aspx.

If the CONVERT function is not available in your version of Excel, you'll need to install and load the Analysis ToolPak add-in by navigating to the Tools menu, select Add-Ins, and then check the box next to Analysis ToolPak. Click OK to finish.

Combine Text From Multiple Cells Into A Single Cell

Spreadsheets often contain data separated into multiple cells. Sometimes, however, we would need the data to appear in the same cell. To combine data from multiple cells, use the CONCATENATE function and enter =CONCATENATE(*parameter1*, *parameter2*, *parameter3*, ...) where each of the parameters represents text you want to combine into one cell. If you want a blank space or other punctuation not found in a particular cell, enter it as a parameter enclosed in quotation marks. For example, =CONCATENATE(A2," ",B2) combines the information from A2 and B2 with a space between the data from each cell.

If This . . . Then This

Many things in life are conditional: If we purchase a plane ticket, then we can board the airplane. Likewise, Excel offers the ability to test for a condition and react according to the test results using the IF function. The IF function requires three parameters: The first tests for a condition, the second tells Excel what to do when that condition is true, and the third parameter tells Excel what to do if the first parameter is false. To use the IF function, enter =IF(*parameter1*, *parameter2*, *parameter3*) into the formula bar, replacing parameter values to reflect your test scenario. For example, if the number of guides required for a tour depends on the number of participants, you might use a formula such as the following: =IF(F2>10, 2, 1). In this case, the statement says if there are more than 10 people attending the tour (indicated by the number in cell F2), you'll need two tour guides (indicated by parameter 2). Otherwise, you'll only need to hire one tour guide (indicated by parameter 3).

Use Your Nokia Phone As A Modem



IF YOU FIND YOURSELF WITHOUT an Internet connection on the road, your Nokia phone and Internet service plan may be able to connect your notebook to the Internet. To accomplish this, you must be within a cellular service coverage area and your phone must support the latest version of PC Suite and have IR (infrared), Bluetooth, or USB support. To check for phone compatibility, visit www.nokiausa.com/pcsuite; there you can also download the latest PC Suite version.

If your phone doesn't support the necessary version of PC Suite, you may still be able to connect. To accomplish this, your Nokia must support Bluetooth with the DUN (dial-up networking) profile. Your notebook must also be Bluetooth-enabled. (If your notebook does not have Bluetooth, you can purchase a USB adapter for about \$40.)

In either case, connection speed will be limited by data plan availability and connection type. (USB is the fastest.) Nevertheless, if you need to check email and you're stranded far from a traditional Internet connection, your Nokia can be your lifeline to the world.

The instructions in this article are for Windows XP, but Windows 2000 instructions are similar enough that you should not have problems. These instructions assume you will click Next, OK, Yes, and any similar prompts that continue the processes.

by Jennifer Farwell

1. Home Work

It's a good idea to perform all the following tasks before you leave home, therefore ensuring you can connect. Before you begin, familiarize yourself with your notebook's Bluetooth or IR capabilities or install third-party adapters if needed. If your notebook is more than a year old, check the Windows Update Catalog for updated drivers. (Go to Microsoft Support at support.microsoft.com/?kbid=323166 for assistance with this process.)

3. Connect Using PC Suite

With PC Suite installed and your desired connection selected, click Connect To The Internet in the PC Suite control panel. The program (One Touch Access) will search for your Internet connection and connect to the Internet (allow 10-15 seconds). If it does not, click Settings to choose your service provider and, if necessary, select the modem you want to use.

2. Set Up PC Suite

To set up a modem connection using Nokia's PC Suite, gather your phone (and USB cable, if applicable) and install the PC Suite application on your notebook. Do not connect your phone or cables until PC Suite tells you to do so. After you install the software, the Get Connected wizard will launch to help you set up your connection. (If it doesn't, click the Get Connected button at the bottom of the PC Suite control panel.) The wizard is very intuitive and will lead you through the process of connecting your phone and installing available modems.

You can set up all three connection types (one at a time) using this wizard. If you want to use primarily Bluetooth to access the Internet, setup this connection first. If you run into problems with this process or the next, skip to Keep Trouble At Bay.

4. Set Up The Bluetooth Connection

To accomplish this task, your phone and notebook must be paired (linked). If you have used Bluetooth to sync your phone with your PC, the two should be paired; skip to Create A Network Connection.

5. Set Up Bluetooth On Your Phone

Turn on your phone and look for a Bluetooth icon or option on the main menu. The icon may also be located inside a folder called Connections, Connectivity, Connect, or something similar. Make sure Bluetooth is turned on and that your phone is set to Visible, Discoverable, Shown To All, or similar. If your phone asks you to name the Bluetooth connection, do so.

Exit the Bluetooth settings option but leave the phone on. (For security purposes, after you complete the next section you should return to your phone and change the Bluetooth setting to Hidden or similar, but leave Bluetooth on. Your phone and PC will still be able to find each other.)

6. Set Up The Notebook & Phone To Connect

To manually configure your notebook computer to use Bluetooth, right-click the Bluetooth icon in your notebook's System Tray and select Open Bluetooth Settings. When the Bluetooth Devices display opens, click the Devices tab and click Add. In the Add Bluetooth Device Wizard, click the checkbox in front of My Device Is Set Up And Ready To Be Found. WinXP will display the phone's icon and name; click the icon to select it. WinXP will ask for a passkey. Create a passkey of your choice or let WinXP generate one.

Pick up your phone. It will display a connection request and instruct you to enter the passkey; you have three minutes to do this. In the unlikely event that the phone does not respond, or if WinXP displays a message saying it cannot connect or that it has rejected the passkey, check the documentation that came

with your phone to determine whether you already have a preset passkey.

Your phone may prompt you to choose an identifying name for the PC. If it does, you can choose any name. (The notebook's network name is good.) Your phone should provide a confirmation that the PC is connected. Locate a Paired Devices or Devices option or tab on your phone; you should see the PC listed. The Bluetooth Devices window on your PC will list your phone.

With your phone selected in the PC's Bluetooth Devices window, select Properties. When the properties dialog box opens, click the Services tab. If your mobile device supports DUN, you will see it listed. Select the DUN checkbox and click OK at each screen until you exit Bluetooth Devices.

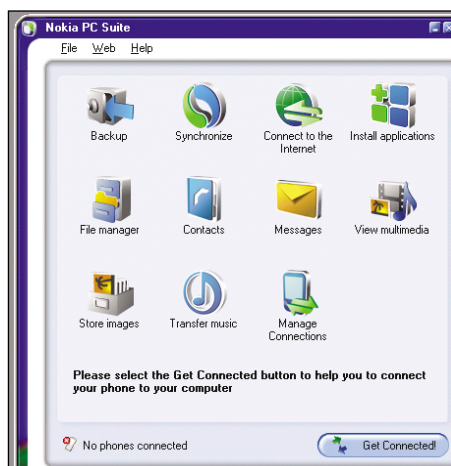
7. Create A Network Connection

On your PC's Start menu, select Control Panel. Double-click the Network Connections icon. In the Network Tasks pane, click Create A New Connection. WinXP will open the New Connection Wizard. Click Next. In the next few screens, select Connect To The Internet, Set Up My Connection Manually, and Connect Using A Dial-Up Modem.

When the Select A Device dialog window appears, click the checkbox in front of Modem – Standard Modem Over Bluetooth Link. Name your new Bluetooth connection, provide your Internet dial-in number, and decide if the connection will be available to you only or to anyone using your PC.

If you normally have Internet service on your mobile phone, you may also be able to use that connection. In place of the ISP's phone number, type *99#. (Leave username and password blank.)

Under Internet Account Information, provide your Internet logon username (including the domain, such as earthlink.net) and password. Uncheck the checkbox in front of Make This The Default Internet Connection unless you want to use it as your primary dial-up connection. Click the checkbox in front of Add A Shortcut To This Connection On My Desktop, and click Finish.



The PC Suite Control Panel gives you easy, one-click options for connecting your phone and notebook, managing those connections, and connecting to the Internet.

8. Connect Using Bluetooth

Right-click the connection icon on your Desktop and click Connect. In the Connect dialog box, provide your username and password if they are not filled in. Click Dial. WinXP will connect to the Internet and display a connection icon in your system tray. You cannot use your phone while you are connected. To disconnect, right-click the connection icon on your Desktop and select Disconnect.

9. Keep Trouble At Bay

If PC Suite won't recognize or set up your Bluetooth connection, click the Manage Connections icon and disable all other connections. Click Re-run Get Connected. If that doesn't work, try creating it manually, beginning with Set Up Bluetooth Connection. You may also need to disable all connection methods other than the one you want to use each time you connect to the Internet.

If you cannot dial-up via Bluetooth, double-click the dial-up connection icon on your Desktop and click Properties. Ensure the Bluetooth modem is selected and the numbers are correct. You may also need to obtain a special modem initialization string from your mobile device provider.

If you still cannot connect, make sure your service provider has enabled CSD (circuit-switched data) for your plan. In an attempt to encourage users to purchase high-speed data plans, some providers have removed or blocked this feature in their plans.



The Mobile Tech Answer Man

Our Guy Asks The Experts



Tech-savvy travelers know that portable technology is personal: You regard your notebook as a trusted friend (we hope) and you've resigned yourself to your PDA's quirks. We've dedicated this corner of the magazine to strengthening those bonds by answering the tech-related "I wonder . . ." questions that roll through your mind while you wait for that delayed flight.

Q Are USB Drives Reliable?

A If you have bitter memories of floppy disks that snapped under minor pressure or ate your data at a particularly inopportune moment, you'll be glad to know that your USB flash drive is much more reliable. "The failure rate for flash drives from a top-tier manufacturer is less than half a percent (below 0.5%). The likelihood of any single, given component failing within a quality flash drive is very minute," says Steve Fung, Memorex flash drives product manager.

Your USB flash drive most likely uses one of the two popular NAND memory types: MLC (Multi-Level Cell) or SLC (Single-Level Cell). MLC memory has a higher density than SLC (it stores more data per cell), but it is slower than SLC. SLC is also more reliable: It is less likely to encounter errors and it lasts significantly longer than MLC memory.

Not surprisingly, flash drive manufacturers often put the cost-effective MLC memory in inexpensive flash drives and use SLC memory to give top-shelf drives extra speed and durability. "For medium and lightweight use, MLC NAND Flash will certainly do the job and for regular consumers to use I would say it's certainly suitable," says Steffen Hellmold, VP of product marketing at Lexar. "If your data really matters to you to the utmost extent, my recommendation would be to go with the SLC NAND Flash as the storage medium, as that is the most reliable storage that we know today as far as data integrity goes out of the two choices mentioned."

Q How Can I Safely Use A Public Computer To Access My Bank Account?

A You face a greater security risk when you head to your hotel's lobby computer than you do when you check your account balance on your notebook from the comfort of your hotel room: Malicious users have direct access to these computers and can install keyloggers, which capture your keystrokes.

If you need to enter passwords on a public computer, you'll find that an encrypted password manager can come in handy. CyberScrub's KeyChain software, for example, installs to both your home computer and your USB flash drive. The software stores Web site URLs, user names, passwords, and other information (including, if you choose, your bank account and credit card numbers). Thanks to this setup, you can visit a Web site and enter all of your info with a series of mouse clicks, rather than identifiable keystrokes.

"I don't even carry my credit cards. I just have everything in my KeyChain, and if I need to purchase something online, or even access my credit card information—that's stored within the KeyChain," says Bill Adler, CyberScrub CEO. "Really, it's more safe than having my credit cards in my wallet because I could leave that on the counter; somebody could make a purchase with that. On the other hand, if I were to lose my CyberScrub USB-enabled KeyChain, they're not going to be able to even log in to that program."



by Joshua Gulick

Have a mobile tech-related question?
Send it to answers@pctoday.com.

Q Is It Possible To Revive A Mobile Phone After I've Dropped It In A Cup Of Coffee?

A Mobile phones can take a lot of abuse without flinching: We've seen phones drop (from our own, fumbling hands, sadly) to concrete sidewalks and down staircases without breaking. Sure, our phones have plenty of scuff marks, chips, and the occasional scratched display, but when we need to make a call, they're ready to go.

Liquids, however, represent the ultimate enemy to electronics. Drop your phone into your coffee, a pool, or even a puddle, and you may find yourself looking for those public pay phones that used to be so handy. "Once an electronic device is contaminated with a liquid, there are fundamentally two processes that occur, either of which can eventually destroy the device," says John Wernecke, public relations spokesman for Motorola mobile devices. "The first is chemical corrosion, resulting purely from the reaction of the liquid and anything it contains, with metals, primarily electrical interconnects. The second, electrochemical corrosion, results from the action of an electrical potential that drives formation of dendrites that then short the circuits within the device."

Wernecke tells us that acidic liquids are more dangerous to your phone than neutral liquids, but he points out that if you doctor your coffee, your hapless phone is in even greater danger. "Cream and sugar will impede drying," he says.

Your phone's best chance for survival is to dry thoroughly before powering back on. Wernecke recommends that you remove the battery. Unfortunately, only time can heal your phone, so use common sense when you try to speed up the drying process. "Do not attempt to dry your phone in an oven or microwave, either will likely cause worse damage than letting the phone air dry," says Wernecke.

Muzibul Khan, vice president of product management at Samsung, points out that you shouldn't expect your dealer to cover the phone's repair if you drop the device into a liquid. Many phones have a built-in sensor that is triggered when the water penetrates the phone's shell. "The water indicator is basically an indicator that changes color once it's exposed to water or some liquid like that," says Khan.

Q What Is WPA2?

A Whether you're shopping for home networking equipment or planning for a company-wide wireless network, you'll come across WPA2 (Wi-Fi Protected Access 2) as soon as you examine available wireless security standards. The packaging for many of today's networking products tout the Wi-Fi Alliance's WPA2 certification, which ensures that compatible equipment can take advantage of the WPA2 security standard. WPA2 is based on the IEEE's 802.11i security standard.

Although WPA2 isn't a spring chicken (IEEE 802.11i was ratified in June of 2004), it's a strong wireless security standard. WPA2 is stronger than WPA and WEP (Wired Equivalency Privacy), which suffered from vulnerabilities that let experienced hackers break into the networks they attempted to protect. WEP remains popular among home network users who don't expect hackers to take much interest in their small-scale networks, but many businesses no longer consider WEP an acceptable defense against tech-savvy malicious users.

WPA also doesn't protect networks as well as WPA2, largely because it uses RC4 ciphers instead of the stronger AES (Advanced Encryption Standard). WPA isn't weak, but the government-approved AES encryption makes WPA2 a solid choice for security-conscious users. The good news is that WPA2 is backward compatible with WPA, meaning you can use your WPA-enabled notebook to connect to a WPA2-enabled router that also serves WPA2 devices.

If you're dealing with a home network, you'll most likely use the WPA2 Personal mode, which makes use of a passphrase. WPA2 Enterprise mode requires a special server that tracks network users and prevents malicious users from gaining access. To set up WPA2 Personal encryption, you'll need to enter your wireless router's security settings and then create a password (commonly referred to in these settings as a passphrase). All network users must then supply this passphrase when they re-log onto the network.

The Delayed Traveler

by Marty Sems

Admit It, This Is The First Page You Turned To

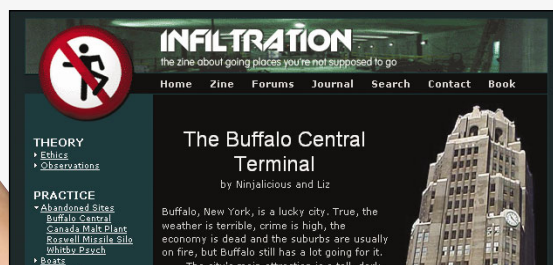
The Poor Road Warrior's Blu-ray

So DVD just isn't cutting it for you when you're on the road. You need a removable disc with at least the storage space of a dual-layer DVD±R DL, but you want it to be drag-and-drop rewriteable, too. And blue-laser HD DVD and Blu-ray are still way overpriced. Maybe it's time to go old-school with DVD-RAM, which can offer up to 9.4GB on a double-sided disc. DVD-RAM is enjoying a resurgence lately, thanks to new hybrid drive engines that support the venerable format. And Plector's new PX-608U portable drive (\$199.99; www.plector.com) is so tiny—slightly bigger than two stacked jewel cases—you won't mind packing it in your laptop case. The Plector writes the other red-laser DVD and CD formats, too, so check it out.



Feeling Infiltrational?

What's behind that locked door in the airport? OK, bad example; we don't want to encourage you to find out. But when you're stuck at a gate waiting for a ridiculously delayed flight, you might just feel bored enough to start exploring where you're not supposed to. Instead, browse to Infiltration.org. You'll read first-hand reports from intrepid trespassers about abandoned missile silos, beached shipwrecks, university tunnels, catacombs, metropolitan sewers . . . in short, all those places you wish you had the brass to explore yourself. Don't forget to cache the pages so you can continue reading offline after takeoff.



Slightly Less Lame Than Acting It Out Yourself

“Perhaps you don't want to see the second-largest ball of twine on the face of the earth, which is only four short hours away?”

Ever get a craving for a favorite movie on the road, but you left the DVD at home? Now, a drowning man will grasp at any straw, so we'll take a list of movie quotes over nothing at all. Look up a movie on IMDB.com, such as “National Lampoon's Vacation,” and scroll down to the Quotes section. Click the (more) link, and relive the good parts in the theater of your mind. “Hey, kids, Big Ben! . . . Parliament!”





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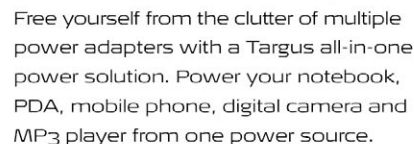
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Departures



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